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THE STRATEGIC RATIONALE FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES  
EMPLOYMENT

A thesis presented to the faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other government agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

THE STRATEGIC RATIONALE FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES  
EMPLOYMENT by Major Robert B. Adolph Jr., USA, 149 pages.

This study examines the potential utilization of Special Operations Forces (SOF) in support of the strategic concept called "Peacetime Engagement". Peacetime Engagement is the proposal of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, Mr. James R. Locher III. Essentially, the concept suggests the pro-active employment of military forces, in concert with the civilian organs of U.S. government, and in times of relative peace, to counteract violence and engage in nation-building in the Third World. The goal of the strategy is to foster democracy by supporting Third World nations in their fight against terrorism, drug-trafficking, insurgencies, and subversion in the environment known as low-intensity conflict.

This thesis suggests that a Triad of U.S. Army SOF (USASOF), supported by other service SOF, and in support of the America's foreign policy objectives, can best accomplish the goals of Peacetime Engagement. For the purposes of my inquiry, USASOF includes Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations. To make this case, the study delves into the strategic history of SOF, and examines the effects of American political culture on the national security policy-making apparatus of the nation. The net result is a recognition that, to date, the U.S. is unable to develop a long-term and coherent strategy for dealing with low-intensity conflict threats, and that SOF can serve as a viable surrogate for that lack of a strategy.

USASOF, because of their unique capabilities and characteristics, should play the lead military role in Peacetime Engagement. USASOF characteristics supporting this position are low visibility, low cost, maturity, experience, linguistic ability, and cultural knowledge and sensitivity. Employment capabilities reflect the kinds of skills required in LIC; e.g. USASOF are skilled as trainers and advisers, have experience in counter-terrorism, and counter-narcotics, as well as counter-insurgency operations, and possibly more importantly - a SOF strategy is acceptable to the American people, and thus Congress. Additionally, other service SOF, because of a new command and control structure, and habitual working relationships, are best suited to support the USASOF Triad. Examples drawn from the continent of Africa will be used in order to further examine the potential for SOF support to the Peacetime Engagement process.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Robert B. Adolph Jr. is a former U.S. Army Infantry Staff Sergeant who was commissioned in Military Intelligence from Officer Candidate School in 1976. He served in that capacity for 11 years before transferring to Special Forces when it was established as an army branch in 1987. His secondary military specialty is in Psychological Operations/Civil Affairs. Adolph holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Sociology from the University of the State of New York, a Master of Arts Degree in International Affairs from The American University, Washington, D.C., and a Master of Military Art and Science Degree in Strategy from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He is a graduate of the Foreign Area Officer Course and attended French, Russian and Arabic language training as part of his service education. Adolph is a military strategist, and a specialist in National Security Policy issues and Middle Eastern affairs.

Adolph served in numerous Special Forces, Military Intelligence and Psychological Operations command and staff positions in the United States and overseas - including a tour of duty as a United Nations Military Observer with Observer Groups Egypt and Lebanon. He is the primary author and architect of the U.S. Army's Functional Area 39 training and personnel program for Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs Officers, and the former Deputy Chief of the Special Operations Proponency Office at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School.

In addition to service with the military, Adolph taught an undergraduate seminar in World Politics at American University as well as courses in U.S. Foreign Policy, American History, and U.S. Government at Central Texas College.

Over the last decade Adolph published on a wide variety of professional military, foreign affairs, special operations and historical subjects. His articles, commentary, essays and book reviews appeared in the Los Angeles Herald Examiner, Chicago Tribune, Army Times, Fayetteville Observer, The Daily News, United Nations Truce Supervision News, Military Review, Civil Affairs Journal and Special Warfare, Military Intelligence, Army and Infantry Magazines.

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I am indebted to many for their help in completing this work, but to no one more than Dr. Steve Metz, my thesis committee chairman. Dr. Metz's timely and cogent advice, editorial support and friendship made for a positive and cooperative academic environment. Others whose help was crucial were the remainder of my thesis committee, Ltc. William Burritt, Major Dave Sessoms and Major Pete Anderson. Their assistance and support throughout the last year was always valuable and much appreciated.

From outside the Command and General Staff College community I want to extend appreciation to Col. August Jannarone and Ltc. Wayne Morgan at US Special Operations Command, Mr. Fred Fuller at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School Library, Ltc. Jim Deal and Maj. Butch Cassidy at the Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, Ltc. Bryant Shaw in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Ltc. Charlie Snyder at the Department of State, Mr. Tom Crouch and Maj. Sam Deford at the Army-Air Force Center for Low-Intensity Conflict, Mr. Bob Mountel at the USA Special Operations Command (for previous tutoring), Ltc. Dennis Barlow and Maj. Rip Kirby at the Joint Chiefs of Staff/J5, Col. Chris Needles on the National Security Council Staff, and Naval Capt. Michael Slattery at the Joint Special Operations Command. All of the above took time out of their busy schedules to locate and provide to me research materials I could not have acquired any other way.

I would be grossly remiss if I did not thank Carol Ramkey, Craig Mclean and Betty Bohannon from the Combined Arms Research Library. They acted as much more than mere reference librarians, and actually became research assistants when time allowed. Their efforts on my behalf will never be forgotten.

From out of my past I want to thank BG Harley Davis who has served as my role model. His faith in a young staff sergeant launched my commissioned career over 14 years ago. I will be forever grateful for his trust in me. Finally I want to express my appreciation to BG Dick Potter for thinking enough of me to entrust this topic to my care. I hope I haven't disappointed him.

Despite my recognition of the very real assistance of those mentioned above, I alone bear full responsibility for the contents and interpretations or misinterpretations in this document.

## DEDICATION

This effort is dedicated to my wife, Dawn. There are only a few ways to adequately say thank you to a woman who has done so much for me. Unfortunately, this dedication isn't one of them.

She suffered long through four commands and the necessary but tedious staff assignments. She suffered through a previous Masters Degree (she even typed my thesis). She suffered through our initial separation in Germany and then made a home where terrorists nearly took the lives of her husband and son. She tolerated an untold number of temporary duty assignments (200,000 miles of air travel in one year). She managed through my short tour in the Middle East and the constant worry that entailed. She kept her chin up through inadequate housing, waiting lists, a sick child, passport offices, bitchy neighbors, an eye infection in Israel, a broken foot in Damascus, and the loneliness, fear and anger that only a soldier's wife could know.

She suffered all this for me. Through it all she provided a warm home, wise council and a caring heart. She knows that despite my promises to the contrary she is probably in for more of the same - and yet she stays with me. I am blessed and awed by her simple courage and the love she holds for me. I will never be able to adequately repay her, nor make-up for all the heartache I have brought to her life. I am just thankful that she chose to stay. Thank you Baby! Though you probably wouldn't want it: this thesis is dedicated to you.



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Research Question:

What is the strategic rationale for Special Operations Forces employment? A potentially useful characterization concerning this subject was recently made by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD SO/LIC), Mr. James R. Locher, III, as "Peacetime Engagement". Secretary of Defense Cheney later adopted Mr. Locher's Peacetime Engagement concept for his 1990 Annual Report to the President and the Congress. I have decided to build on this characterization and attempt to take it to its logical conclusion. According to Mr. Locher:

Peacetime Engagement is a strategy for promoting democracy in the Third World and for defeating low intensity conflict threats. It implements a two-pronged approach to reach these ends. First, it seeks to counteract violence through the use of U.S. military forces that perform missions to counter terrorism, narcotics trafficking, insurgencies, and subversion. Once a more stable security environment prevails, Peacetime Engagement initiates a second phase that utilizes various instruments of U.S. national power to promote nation-building. The ultimate goals of this strategy are to redress Third World instability, to avoid direct and costly involvement of U.S. military forces in conventional combat, and to promote development of lasting democratic and economic institutions.<sup>1</sup>

Although there is little in this concept that is new or startling, Peacetime Engagement is important because it is the first time that such a concept has been forwarded by an agency of government. There have been innumerable proposals made from academia and by other government bodies and knowledgeable individuals, but Peacetime Engagement is the first strategy outline formally adopted by DoD.

How the government handles military employment in time of peace falls within the definition of low-intensity conflict (LIC). I will examine the potential for the use of Special Operations Forces (SOF) to counteract violence and to conduct nation-building. In so doing I hope to illuminate the strategic rationale for SOF employment. This investigation will include a short examination of American foreign policy, national strategy, national military strategy, and how SOF play a supporting role in their implementation.

It became clear in preliminary research that my topic is one that has yet to be written about in any depth. There are any number of singularly discrete ways to break this topic down to a manageable size for academic pursuit, but to do so insures that there will be little understanding of the whole. This means that I may go broader afield than like academic pursuits. My intent is to take a more

holistic approach even though to do so runs contrary to academic norms.

For the purposes of this thesis, it is necessary to define precisely what I mean by the phrase "strategic rationale". Specifically, it is the answer to the question of, "why SOF?". It encompasses two parts: The first is a vision of the desired end-state which is often expressed as the national interests America seeks to promote, protect or obtain. The second part is the means or ways by which those objectives can be achieved. This also possesses a qualitative component - that is an examination into SOF as potentially the most effective tool in order to "best" achieve the desired end-state given the constraints of a pluralistic democracy.

#### Thesis Structure:

My thesis structure includes a standard introduction. The second chapter will briefly examine the history of U.S. foreign policy in the post World War II period and how SOF have been used to support U.S. policy objectives in the past. Chapter 3 examines recent national strategy documents to highlight the relationship between national strategy and SOF. Chapter 4 will examine the strategic rationale for SOF employment from a national perspective, and the two most prevalent historical trends in

American political culture: how they effect U.S. strategy development, and how SOF can serve as a viable surrogate for a strategy without a clear national mandate. Chapter 5 will discuss the potential for a SOF strategy in Africa. Chapter 6 examines various means by which SOF can be used to counteract violence, and Chapter 7 examines potential SOF roles in nation-building. Chapter 8 uses the Strategic Analysis Model to examine a SOF strategy for potential efficacy. The 9th and final chapter contains recommendations.

#### Background:

The genesis of this investigation came in the form of a request from the Commanding General, Special Operations Command, Europe (CG, SOCEUR), BG Richard Potter. He suggested this topic as one which may provide a potential benefit to his command as well as SOF in general. His original request stated my goal to, "capture the strategic rationale for Special Operations Forces employment on the continent of Africa". I felt compelled to modify the topic to the one stated in my first paragraph (research question), when it became clear to me during my early investigation of this subject that a "strategic rationale" at the national level had not been written previously.

Finding this difficult to believe, I contacted staffers who work on SO and LIC issues at the National Security Council (NSC), Department of State (DoS), Department of Defense (DoD), the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). The only attempt that had been made to date is Mr. Locher's concept of Peacetime Engagement.

As my investigation proceeded, I came to the realization that if a worthwhile strategic rationale for SOF employment existed, that rationale was equally applicable in any region of the globe. This compelled me to concentrate much of my effort on the strategic rationale itself as opposed to creating a document concerned wholly with Africa.

Purpose of thesis:

SOF in all the services has generally undergone significant growth and organizational development in the last 10 years. The congressionally mandated creation of the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), and establishment of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command (USAFSOC), U.S. Navy Special Warfare Command (USNSWC), First Special Forces Command (1st SFCOM), and the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations

Command (USACAPOC) highlights the new importance placed in an arena of conflict which is seldom clearly understood. That arena, sometimes referred to as "the violent peace", is one which often defies conventional political and military thought. This is the case because the prime forces at work at the low-intensity end of the conflict spectrum are often more political, psychological (sometimes referred to as informational), and economic than military. Additionally, U.S. internal institutional problems abound. According to one expert, "Projections of future low-intensity threats are not optimistic."<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, SOF capabilities for peacetime employment in LIC are not generally well known or understood throughout government. The staffers at various levels of government who work LIC or SOF issues generally know the SOF business and how these forces operate in the LIC environment; but their knowledge is based on either SOF specific backgrounds or on-the-job-training. Unfortunately, and based on my own personal experience, their perspectives often come to reflect a "where you sit is where you stand" mentality (meaning that staffers who work at DoS, DoD and JCS often reflect their institutional biases).

Congressional recognition of SOFs' capabilities in LIC led to the creation of USSOCOM. Kenneth Brooten Jr. reported the following in the Journal of Defense and Diplomacy.

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 mandated a study to determine the need for a Special Operations Command. As a result of the Joint Low-Intensity Conflict Project and its final report and still classified recommendations, a late rider on the Defense Appropriations Bill directed that the command be established.<sup>3</sup>

I believe it to be of special note that USSOCOM was created, in part, on the recommendation of a LIC study. The remainder of congressional motive for the creation of USSOCOM was based on the very public failures of SOF in Iran at "Desert 1" and because of problems in command and control of elements of JSOC by a sister service in Grenada. The relationship between SOF and LIC is a strong one. Based on my investigations, it seems to me that whatever problems currently exist in establishing a strategic rationale for SOF employment in the LIC environment have little to do with the forces themselves; but are instead tied to the political realities inherent in America's democracy and the political legacy of the war in Vietnam. More concerning this issue will be seen in subsequent chapters.

According to an acquaintance at DoS, (who wishes to remain anonymous), the term "civic action" is so closely



associated with America's political debacle in Vietnam that the mere mention of the term insures negative reactions from foreign service officers. The same is true of the mention of "Green Berets". The term "psychological operations" also carries with it an extraordinary number of odious connotations.

Additionally, diplomats habitually view soldiers as one-dimensional thinkers: good for fighting and incapable of understanding the nuances of diplomacy and economy. In addition to the perceptual problems, an institutional difficulty exists between the two major organs of the executive branch (DoS and DoD) that deal with foreign affairs and the military. These are difficulties that will not be easily resolved.

In times of peace, the DoS is preeminent in foreign affairs. In time of war, the DoD is the lead agency. But what of times that fit the definitions of neither peace nor war? Who is in charge, DoS or DoD? The President through the National Security Council (NSC) is supposed to handle inter-agency coordination, but more often the NSC is used as a tool for compromise. The National Security Advisor's power derives directly from the President. He is not a decision maker. Here lie the seeds of potential discord. "Unity of command" is a principle of war, but the term

"constructive ambiguity" is a DoS invention. These two organs of government are fundamentally different in how they perceive the world at large.

According to A.M. Rosenthal,

The foreign policy bureaucracy has shown repeatedly that its only real passion is for the status quo. And most U.S. diplomats I have met do not consider promoting human rights and democracy as important foreign policy goals or national interests."

Diplomats often adopt a "wait and see" attitude, and soldiers will normally look for more pro-active approaches to problem-solving. In the words of two experts, "The Foreign Service Officer believes that his is an arcane craft which people on the outside cannot hope to understand."

Despite these fundamental differences in outlook and perception, both institutional sub-cultures recognize that solid policy statements at the top tend to ameliorate difficulties in inter-agency coordination; and, it is hoped that in the post-Persian Gulf War period the military's intellectual standing will be improved among foreign service officers.

Many staffers at the NSC, DoS, DoD and JCS are convinced that SOF lack a strategic rationale. In this context, lack of strategic rationale refers to a lack of policy-making consensus at the top concerning why and how to

employ SOF. The LIC term itself confuses the issue. LIC today encompasses counter-narcotics, guerrilla warfare, psychological warfare, civic actions, security assistance, diplomacy, economics, foreign internal defense and more. Because of the nature of America's foreign policy making apparatus, developing such a rationale will be challenging.

The role of providing a national strategic rationale (a vision) is historically the purview of the presidency. From that vision, it is the role of the Secretary of Defense, advised by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to develop a national military strategy to support the President's vision. John F. Kennedy provided such a vision in his inaugural address on 21 January 1961,

To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period may be required-not because the communists may be doing it, but because it is right. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich."

Kennedy's vision provided a national strategic rationale for pro-active foreign policy development for DoS and DoD and the ultimate rationale for the employment of SOF in the early 60s. More specifically, Kennedy thought that:

Pure military skill is not enough. A full spectrum of military, paramilitary, and civil action must be blended to produce success... To win this struggle, our officers and men must understand and combine the political economic and civil actions with skilled military efforts in the execution of this mission."

Based upon his understanding of the threat of unconventional conflicts, Kennedy took a personal interest in SOF expansion. Kennedy backed his words with action. His vision, and to a lesser degree action, is largely lacking today. Because a strategic vision is currently unarticulated, the SOF community seems sometimes to "wiggle on a hook" without a well defined direction.

It is argued that a SOF strategic rationale is the province of the Secretary of Defense and not the President, (and most assuredly not DoS). That argument cites the fact that it is the job of the President to set broad national goals in either peace or war. But again, the same problem rears its head. If LIC is neither peace nor war then who is responsible for developing a national strategy for LIC, and based on what rationale? Logic dictates that a SOF strategic rationale for employment (clearly the mission of DoD and JCS) would be developed from a LIC national strategy. Currently America lacks both.

This circumstance sets the stage for inter-agency dueling. "Who is the boss", is an often asked question. Staffers at the National Security Council deal with this question regularly. At this point it is necessary to state what has become an article of faith among those who study LIC. SOF and LIC are not synonymous. The employment of SOF is not the only potential solution to problems arising in the LIC environment; but SOF, because of their unique capabilities and characteristics, have an extraordinary and recognized potential for working in the LIC environment.

When Congress forced the establishment of USSOCOM upon the executive branch, they did so without providing the necessary strategic vision. Even if our congressmen and senators had performed this critical task, it would have been largely irrelevant because that role is reserved for the Commander in Chief, the President. I have spoken with many LIC and SOF experts. They all say essentially the same thing: the threat posed by LIC is the most imminent in America's future. The President, Congress, DoS, DoD and JCS all appear to be in agreement.

The problem exists in how LIC should be addressed and based on what rationale. This is a political question that our most senior civilian leadership has yet to grapple with in a meaningful way. Essentially, Congress created an

improved capability and advocacy for SOF with the establishment of USSOCOM and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict; but the national command authority (NCA) has, as yet, failed to provide a vision for SOF employment.

Providing such a vision for SOF is doubly difficult because SOF are different things to different people. SOF to some are the traditional "gunfighters": the Green Berets, Rangers, SEALs and Delta Force. Others view SOF capabilities in a different light.

The peacetime employment of SOF to assist in the training of potentially democratic militaries, the development of civil infrastructures and the building of democratic institutions is a recognized USSOCOM mission. The former CINC, USSOCOM, General James J. Lindsay put it this way:

Many of the forces assigned to USSOCOM are well suited to indirect application of military power. They are oriented to specific regions and cultures, have the requisite language skills, are sensitive to political environments and adopt a low visibility. Primarily through the indirect measures of foreign internal defense, our forces can contribute to the prevention or improvement of conditions that spawn subversion, terrorism and insurgency in the Third World."

The two roles of "gunfighter" and "nation-builder" obviously have different aims. Where should the CINC, USSOCOM direct the preponderance of his effort, and based on what national, or national military strategy? Additionally, the very phrase "nation-building" possesses ethnocentric overtones from the perspective of a Third World leader. Nation or country assistance might be a better way of characterizing American intentions given the concept of Peacetime Engagement.

The plethora of pronouncements in both the Reagan and Bush administrations concerning LIC over the last decade has not provided a national direction, nor a blue print for action. America has developed a substantially improved capability in some areas of Army SO. Navy and Air Force special warfare units have also prospered, but much less has been done to increase our national military abilities in either Psychological Operations or Civil Affairs.

Unfortunately, and in the past, the conventional military has viewed both PSYOP and CA as largely peripheral activities in the high intensity conflict environment that it has been preparing for since the end of World War II; but in LIC, PSYOP and CA forces can play "the" pivotal role in bringing an insurgency to an end by attacking the core reasons for unrest. Psychological Operations and Civil

Affairs, in many potential Third World scenarios, could play more significant roles than any other military components of national power.

The difficulty in developing a strategic rationale for employment of Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs may be even more troublesome. Some PSYOP capabilities are mirrored in the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), as are the capabilities of CA by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Obviously, in peacetime, these U.S. government and civilian led organizations, ply their respective trades in support of U.S. policies. The employment in the Third World of either PSYOP or CA forces sets the stage for potential inter-agency battles.

U.S. Representative Dan Daniel, now deceased, foresaw the difficulty in making national policy concerning LIC. He introduced a bill in the House of Representatives 26 June 1986 which would have created a special operations agency headed by a civilian. The year before Daniel supported the creation of a 6th service for SOF. Daniel's reasoning, as reported in Armed Forces Journal International, was:



If we don't assure those improvements, oversight, command and control, and adequate resources, combined with a coherent national strategy and doctrine for their employment, then we are facing very dangerous and potentially disastrous problems worldwide in our employment of Special Operations Forces.\*

Representative Daniel felt that only a national agency or 6th service could provide the necessary advocacy and develop a coherent national strategy for SOF.

Why does the United States require a national as opposed to national military strategy in Rep. Daniels' view? Although SOF have roles to play in the low, mid and high intensity conflict environments, their greatest value may be predominantly national strategic. "USSOCOM forces are considered strategic assets because they primarily support national and theater strategic objectives."<sup>12</sup> In peacetime, SOF are seldom employed without the consultation and approval of DoS. In time of national emergency (terrorist incidents and other missions directed by the NCA), the decision to employ SOF resides with the President. SOFs' strategic utility is significant.

What can I hope to accomplish? If what I have discovered to date is true: that the nation lacks a vision and therefore a strategic rationale upon which to develop a strategy, then my efforts may be useful in furthering that goal. It seems to me that Mr. Locher's concept of Peacetime

Engagement is an excellent start at articulating a potential strategy and rationale for SOF employment. It is also clear that SOF, because of their unique capabilities and characteristics, can help fill the strategic vacuum created by the nation's inability to develop a LIC strategy. What I can do is to try to fill in the gaps: to attempt to match SOFs' capabilities with national goals in the hope that such information may further a meaningful dialogue.

In addition, I believe that nothing the U.S. does in the international arena should be without a moral basis that reflects America's collective ideals. In fact, it seems to me that American ideals provide a portion of the rationale for the further development of Peacetime Engagement. Certainly, for those unfamiliar with SOF and their role in LIC, my thesis might provide an overview and hopefully a good point of departure for further research and discussion.

The continent of Africa may well provide an important case study concerning this topic because Africa continues to possess strategic interests for the United States. During the Cold War, the case was made that African mineral resources and location relative to sea lanes of communication were of strategic importance to the United States. The same case continues to be valid, but now possibly for different reasons.

America's economic and security assistance apportionments follow close on the heels of declarations that countries and/or regions are important to U.S. strategic interests. Witness the massive outlays of economic and military aid to Israel and Egypt. The preservation of the state of Israel (a stated U.S. policy objective) and the continuing flow of Persian Gulf oil (another stated policy objective) provide the strategic rationale for both actions.

Aside from the obvious - that Africa possesses enormous mineral wealth, that the continent's landmass is 3 times that of the U.S., and that Africa remains astride potentially critically important military sea lines of communication and civil trade routes - why should America be engaged on the continent? How committed is the U.S. to the twin goals of fostering democracy and establishing peace as a global norm? Does America stand for more than the sum of its economic needs and wants? The answers may lie in historic American values and the concept of Peacetime Engagement given the new strategic environment created by the fall of Communism.

Africa contains many internal contradictions. It is impossible to lump the peoples of Africa together in one grouping. The Arabized peoples and governments of north and

east Africa, at first glance, have little in common with those of the central and southern regions. Many African governments are openly hostile towards South Africa which is still controlled by a white minority. Former colonial powers still possess considerable influence in Africa; and in the post World War II world, the United States has demonstrated an interest and considerable political sway in the area. The Third World debt crisis threatens many governments on the continent as do the problems of drought and disease. Additionally, and in many cases, the lack of African political, social, cultural, governmental and economic infrastructure militate against easy solutions.

A succession of U.S. Presidential administrations since the end of World War II have professed American interests in the proliferation of democracy, peace, economic growth and security around the globe in order to counteract the influence of the Soviet Union. Now that the Soviet Union appears to be consumed with pressing domestic concerns, are these global goals still valid policy objectives in Africa? President Bush, in the March 1990 National Security Strategy of The United States, states:

Institution-building, economic development, and regional peace are the goals of our policy in Africa. The global trends of democracy must come to Africa too. All these goals must be achieved if Africa is to play its rightful role as an important factor in the international system. Africa is a major contributor to the world supply of raw materials and minerals and a region of enormous human potential.<sup>11</sup>

Who will assist in building the institutions, developing the economies, and making regional peace a reality in Africa? The President's statement is made in the context of a "new world order" where the Soviets are relegated to a secondary position in world affairs. How are these goals to be realized?

In the post World War II world, America led the western-democratic nations to the ultimate defeat of Communism. In this conflict, the Third World was the great "chess board" between the competing ideologies of Marxism and Democratic-Capitalism. Third World nations became the pawns in the greater world conflict of these opposing paradigms; but even at this writing, it is essential to remember that Communism's demise has not appreciably effected Soviet military potential.

A preponderance of the reasoning for American interest in the Third World was in the attempt to contain what the Soviets termed "wars of national liberation" and

the spread of Marxist ideology. With the apparent collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, America entered a new strategic environment. This new environment reflects a world which remains largely in poverty where non-representative governments are common and where the United States is the only "Super-power".

Secretary of Defense Cheney, in his Annual Report to the President and the Congress states:

Special Operations Forces play a critical role... Characterized by flexible, small unit organizations with a wide range of specialized skills, they help strengthen emerging democracies by providing numerous forms of assistance: security, training, humanitarian, and military civic action; psychological action; civil affairs; and combined U.S., allied, and host-country operations. They are capable of assisting host countries in combatting insurgencies, terrorism, and narcotics trafficking and related violence.<sup>12</sup>

My ultimate purpose is to conduct an investigation into why SOF capabilities and characteristics are key in the LIC environment; how those capabilities and characteristics can support American foreign policy goals; and lastly to apply that understanding to the continent of Africa in order to illuminate both in light of the break-up of the Warsaw Pact and the apparent end of the "Cold War". In so doing, it is hoped a strategic rationale for SOF employment will become clear.

### **Assumptions:**

(1) A stable and prospering Third World is important to U.S. interests. (2) The employment of SOF has a major supporting role to play in the attainment of those U.S. interests in Africa as well as the remainder of the Third World.

### **Limitations:**

Although SOF and Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) have received a great deal of press recently and much has been written on Africa, there are few who agree even on definitions much less the potential employment of SOF into the LIC environment. Assistant Secretary of Defense Locher's concept of Peacetime Engagement is a much needed beginning in the search for a rationale for SOF employment. Because it is only a beginning, I may be compelled into taking stands with little academic support.

My investigation will examine the joint application and employment of Special Operations Forces (SOF). "Joint", meaning multiple service participation, has become an article of faith to those in the SOF community with the recognition that no service can do it alone. I consider this a limitation because it will be difficult, if not impossible, to do justice to the enormous capability contained in these forces.

**Significance:**

If my assumptions are correct, and SOF do have a major supporting role to play in the achievement of the objectives of Peacetime Engagement, the significance of my inquiry will become self-evident. Additionally, since the study will attempt to capture the "strategic rationale" for SOF employment in support of the objectives of Peacetime Engagement, vice other kinds of forces, then the analysis will have applicability in geographic areas other than Africa where SOF might potentially serve national interests.

"Containment" has been America's strategy for dealing with the Soviet Union for over 40 years. Containment is also strategically defensive in nature. This means that for over 4 decades the Soviet Union has nearly always possessed the initiative. Peacetime Engagement provides the United States an opportunity to take the strategic offensive around the globe. No longer constrained by strictly bi-polar considerations, America is now in a position to take the lead and to assist in shaping "the new world order".

Although SOF are not a panacea for correcting the ills of Africa or any other region, they are an extraordinary national tool that can do much in the furtherance of democracy, peace, and security in the Third



World. Under the tenets of Peacetime Engagement, this is no small potential undertaking for the U.S., and one which would no doubt be accomplished in concert with our allies.

#### Review of Literature:

National policy documents provided my starting point: followed by examinations of national military strategy documents. I also used defense related journals and magazines extensively. The reader will also note that I leaned heavily on "draft" and "test" doctrinal literature which is being written at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS), other special operations commands, the Combined Arms Center (CAC), DoS, DoD, and JCS.

## Endnotes

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## CHAPTER 2

### THE STRATEGIC DICHOTOMY OF LIC

Assistant Secretary Locher's concept for Peacetime Engagement in the Third World calls for the pro-active employment of the military to "promote democracy in the Third World and for defeating low-intensity conflict threats". Essentially, the strategy attempts to "counter-act violence" and then engage in "nation-building". The fledgling strategy has great potential but not without addressing some problems first. An examination of the American past since World War II might be beneficial.

World War II, as a declared conventional war, had well defined objectives: the destruction of Nazi Germany and the Japanese Empire. The United States' reasoning for going to war, ultimately, was obvious and received near universal support from the American people. American goals in subsequent conflicts were not so clearly defined.

The Korean Conflict, although not a declared war in a constitutional sense, was fought primarily in the conventional way: army clashed with army to determine the ultimate political outcome. Unconventional warfare played a minor role throughout the conflict. This war produced the

first American military stalemate in this century. The United States' reasoning for fighting in Korea was less clear. The confusion went all the way to the Army's senior leadership. As General of The Army Douglas MacArthur discovered upon being relieved from command, victory, in the traditional sense, was not the goal President Harry Truman sought. MacArthur defined success in only one way: the total defeat of the enemy. According to John Spanier, "The cold war did not draw a clear-cut line between peace and war."<sup>1</sup>

President Truman, fearing the potential for further Chinese and possibly Soviet involvement, sought a political settlement that he assumed would avoid another world war, or potentially, the first nuclear conflict. "Containment", as conceived by George Kennan, was a foreign and hateful concept to MacArthur. Generations of American soldiers fought and died for victory. How could a commander in the field explain that victory was now beyond their grasp and that their lives were potentially forfeit for the then embryonic notion of "Containment". In MacArthur's own words, "War's very object is victory - not prolonged indecision. In war there is no substitute for victory."<sup>2</sup>

A dichotomy was thus formed between what politicians feared and what soldiers were trained to do - fight and win!

In the "Atomic Age", political clarity, upon which generals conceived their war plans, was at a premium. President Dwight Eisenhower's decision to build-up strategic nuclear forces left the United States woefully unprepared to conduct either conventional or unconventional warfare. According to one expert:

Once the administration decided to rely on nuclear weapons, it set out to garner support for this move and to implement it. Within the defense establishment, emphasis on tactical nuclear weapons paved the way for support of defense cuts by the Army."

Notwithstanding the initial emphasis on nuclear weapons, the potential threat of Communist inspired insurgent movements was still clear enough to provide both American politicians and soldiers a sufficiently clear threat for the later pursuit of a more balanced force development in support of a policy of "flexible response" under the Kennedy Administration. But, even during Eisenhower's presidency, the possibility that America might support democratic freedom movements in Eastern Europe led to the creation of the Psychological Warfare Center and 10th Special Forces at Ft. Bragg, NC in 1952.

From a political as well as military perspective, the most important principle of war is "objective". In other words, what is the desired end-state (how is success defined)? The objective defines both the ways and means of achieving desired results. Although the Eisenhower

Administration began military aid to South Vietnam, it was the Kennedy, followed by the Johnson Administration, that accelerated the build-up in Vietnam of American military forces. President Eisenhower's reasoning for supporting the South Vietnamese was to fill the power vacuum left by the moribund French colonial administration, and as a simple extension of containment policy: the objective to contain Communism until it collapsed of the weight of its own internal contradictions.

President Kennedy's approach, although based on the same premise, was more pro-active and better defined:

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty.\*

Kennedy's reasoning left little to the imagination. Note that these words do not address themselves directly to the fight against Communism, although that is no doubt the intended purpose. Since a conventional conflict with the Soviet Union possessed the threat of nuclear holocaust, an unconventional option was required. Kennedy came to embrace psychological and counter-guerrilla warfare as the best means of achieving the "survival and success of liberty" external to the borders of the United States.

Vietnam later became America's longest and most debated conflict of this century. Congress never declared war against the North Vietnamese and our objectives for fighting the war changed with presidential administrations. Without a clearly defined objective, the war went on without a successful resolution. Without clearly defined objectives, the ways and means to achieve the desired end-state compelled those who prosecuted the war to first use unconventional means, then a combination of both conventional and unconventional means, and finally to use strategic bombing. This case was probably best made by Colonel Harry Summers in his book, On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context. The finale to this strategic confusion was a foregone conclusion - America lost.

Korea and Vietnam were not declared wars as Americans previously understood the definition of declared. Neither were the invasions of Grenada and Panama declared. More recently, over 500,000 American service personnel were engaging Iraq in yet another undeclared war under a United Nations Resolution. Since the end of World War II, technically, America has been at peace. Obviously this is not true, and yet constitutionally it is so.

Here lies the very heart of America's continuing dilemma. There appears to be little clear-cut difference

between peace and war, as Americans understand it, since the end of World War II. It can be called mid or low-intensity conflict, or peacetime competition: but be assured, it didn't look like low-intensity or mere competition to those who fought in Iraq and Kuwait.

What does this have to do with a strategic rationale for SOF employment? SOF are military. The military, in the American experience, fight wars: but in the last half of this century, the definitions of both peace and war have become blurred. The concept of Peacetime Engagement, for the first time since the Kennedy Administration, attempts to nationally address the use of the military to perform acts in time of relative peace to stem the tide of violence and foster democracy. The concept though, is the product of ASD/SOLIC and has not been embraced by the President. Of course historically, regional needs have not driven U.S. policy - interests have.

With the perceived collapse of Communism and the shattering of the Warsaw Pact, it appears that the objective of containment has been met. Communism failed in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and is well on its way to failing in China. The desired end-state occurred. The great question now is what next? Harry Summers, now retired and a syndicated columnist, states the problem well in a recent



opinion piece which appeared in Army Times:

Now what? With our victory in the Cold War, what is now the overarching mission that defines the force? Protect the homeland? Our nuclear deterrent takes care of that. Protect America's interests in the world? Sounds good but what does it mean? What exactly should we organize and train our forces to do? What kind of arms and ammunition do they need? And if we organize, train and equip them too well, does that in itself cause problems? As the only world power capable of massive power projection, will we by default become the world's police force, as some charge is now the case in the Persian Gulf."

It is possible that the United States could see a rebirth of isolationism that characterized much of America before and after World War I. Although possible, I think it unlikely. America's deployment to the Persian Gulf does not suggest a return to isolationism. More likely is the potential for continued American military involvement overseas. The ultimate reasoning for such involvement was suggested by President Kennedy in his inaugural address, "because it is right".

I have heard both academics and civil servants alike scoff at such a rationale. Although Communism seems to be "on the run", there is no lack of tyrants and dictators in much of the Third World. The importance of oil to our allies aside for the moment, the underlying rationale for America's stand against Saddam Hussein is based on moral imperatives: to paraphrase President George Bush, "because

it is right". Based on actions in the United Nations Security Council, most of the rest of the world agrees. Strangely and in a reversal of policy that would have been unthinkable only two years ago, the Soviet Union played the role of political ally to United States goals in the Persian Gulf.

The power of moral imperatives for the support of United States military action on the international stage cannot be overstated. Moral rightness supported the invasions of both Grenada and Panama. The same is true concerning Iraq; but in truth, it is the convergence of both pragmatic self-interest and native American idealism which makes military action possible for the United States. In Iraq, it is the recognized vital interest of the continuing free flow of oil and moral outrage concerning the activities of Saddam Hussein in Kuwait which made the support of the American people possible.

The United States has entered a new strategic environment. This new environment essentially leaves America as the preeminent moral leader of the rest of the globe. I do not mean to infer that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nations do not have moral governments or moral commitments to the Third World; but that the United States, by virtue of its massive economy and the world's

most powerful military, stands largely alone after the fall of Communism.

Additionally, and potentially more important, the United States now possesses a legacy of support to the embattled. World War II would have been lost without American involvement. NATO could not have withstood the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact without the commitment of United States forces following victory over Nazi Germany. On a smaller scale, the government of El Salvador would likely have fallen to Marxist guerrillas as many as 10 years ago without American assistance.

The United States is the only global power left in existence following the demise of the governments founded upon Marxist ideology. Never in the collective history of this planet has there been a situation like that of today. "What next?", is not only a troublesome question of forthcoming American foreign policy, but also a unique opportunity for the United States to occupy the moral high ground.

The moral high ground has been a position America desired always. It is in concert with the American belief that "liberty and justice for all" is a great deal more than words spoken dutifully before a flag. In the new strategic

environment where the United States, possibly by default, is the world's moral leader, how America sets its course into the new century will shape what is now being called the "new world order".

In the post World War II period, the United States often had difficulty putting its "best foot forward" in the Third World. Because successive presidential administrations felt that Communism was the greatest evil, America sometimes supported dictators such as Somoza in Nicaragua. American presidents and congresses knew that Somoza was a dictator, yet looked the other way because Somoza claimed to be anti-communist. In fact, "Association with anti-communist dictators was the norm, especially in Latin America."<sup>2</sup> This stand in Latin America and in other regions made the United States enemies. On too many occasions, American high sounding ideals did not match American actions.

Peoples of the Third World seldom cared to see themselves as pawns in the larger bi-polar drama between American and Soviet giants. Their concerns were, and continue to be, predominantly internal and regional. While America and her allies dealt with the greater evil of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact, a plethora of smaller evils multiplied and prospered: Idi Amin in Uganda, Pol Pot in

Cambodia, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and others too numerous to mention. America could not address these petty dictators and maintain its enormous commitment to NATO simultaneously. Consequently, Third World tyrants have largely gone unchecked up to the present.

I do not mean to suggest that America immediately embark on an international military campaign to eradicate the world's dictators; but fostering democracy continues to be a cornerstone of United States policy, and the military is one component of national power. Diplomacy and economic sanctions failed to convince Saddam Hussein to leave Kuwait so the military component of national power was brought to bear against the tyrant. But what of a potential U.S. strategy aimed at halting aggression and fostering democracy?

The potential for Peacetime Engagement may be significant; and although it is a DOD concept, I believe it is one which can grow to embrace not only DoD but DoS as well. The "Lead Agency Concept" places DoS squarely at the head of any potential American effort to foster democracy and security in the Third World. All branches of service are potential players: conventional and unconventional.

The importance of SOF in this environment which is neither peace nor war, is an article of faith to many who study LIC. "SOF provides a capability that has primary application in the LIC environment." Congress' creation of the USSOCOM is testament to the spread of that article of faith among America's elected leadership. Unfortunately, the Congress could only address half the problem.

The 1986 Joint Low-Intensity Conflict Project, sponsored by the U.S. Army's Training and Doctrine Command, had this to say concerning America's handling of LIC:

Second only to our lack of understanding is our lack of unity in responding to the threats to our interests...Therefore, we must counter ideas with ideas, force with force, diplomacy with diplomacy, and all must flow from a strategy implemented through a strong national unity of effort... At the national level and on a regional basis, unity is lacking. "

The report's authors go on:

Without national direction it is futile to expect unity of effort... A strong, synchronized civil-military effort is essential. The debilitating results of its absence are far reaching... A comprehensive civil-military strategy must be developed to defend our interests threatened by the series of low-intensity conflicts around the globe... It (the strategy) must integrate all the national resources at our disposal, military and nonmilitary, lethal and nonlethal."

And in a seemingly deeply felt and emotional commentary:

Successful operations and activities have been conducted by the United States in various low-intensity conflicts. However, these limited successes are primarily the result of dedicated individuals and organizations achieving success not because of, but in spite of, the absence of a clearly defined low-intensity conflict strategy.<sup>10</sup>

If the project's report is essentially correct, and I believe it is, the problem may be worse now than before. When this report was written, America had a very well defined potential enemy in the Soviet Union. How much worse are America's abilities to deal with LIC today based on strategic direction? Over 4 years have passed since this report was completed, and the United States still has no comprehensive strategy for addressing LIC, nor is a strategy on the horizon. Based on my inquiry to date, Peacetime Engagement is the only governmental attempt at putting forth a strategy for dealing with LIC threats.

Peacetime Engagement suggests a possible answer. Why SOF when other elements of national military power are available? Simply stated, SOF are the only American military forces trained to work habitually in the LIC environment. By virtue of language and cross-cultural communications training; being volunteers to work in hazardous regions; being trainers; being more senior in rank, maturity and experience; SOF are best suited to execute many of the tenets of Peacetime Engagement.

Another question arises out of the last paragraph: Why use the military as opposed to the many civilian agencies that fall under the direction of DoS? Even a cursory glance at the governments of the Third World shows that the majority of those governments are either directly controlled by their militaries or inordinantly influenced by them. The military in the Third World is often "the" power broker. A preponderance of Third World national leaders now wearing suits, at one time wore a uniform. Many even prefer to wear their uniforms openly. Military to military contact is potentially the best way to influence a militaristic national government moving towards establishing a true democracy.

Additionally, foreign service officers at DoS are sometimes ill-equipped by training and experience to deal successfully with military led or influenced Third World governments. It is often security problems, such as terrorism or insurgency, which leads many Third World governments to seek American military advice and assistance. These kinds of security problems are largely low-technology and human resource intensive (SOF strengths). The sale of a squadron of F-16s cannot successfully solve the problems that led to an insurgency; the employment of SOF, supporting and in concert with other of America's foreign policy organs can.



One only has to glance at the current newspaper headlines to note that the Soviet Union is in deep trouble. National impulses and ethnic animosities, for years suppressed through the use of Soviet arms, has come to the fore with a vengeance. Based on current U.S. policies concerning the Soviet Union, the Bush Administration is attempting to shore-up General Secretary Gorbachev's regime. No one knows what will happen there. The possibility exists that if the Soviet Union fragments and devolves into civil war, the United States could become involved militarily. Strangely now, I can't say who America might support.

If right-wing doctrinaire Communists again come to power in the Soviet Union, it would possibly be a more radical group than the United States has ever had to deal with previously. In addition, if such a scenario came to pass, I view it as doubtful that the violence could be contained within Soviet borders. The Soviet Union still possesses one of the largest and most sophisticated military forces on the planet. They remain the only power with the wherewithal to destroy America. Caution in the immediate future is indicated.

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## CHAPTER 3

### ON NATIONAL POLICY AND SOF STRATEGY

According to the September 1990 issue of Army Focus, an official publication of the U.S. Army:

Special Operations Forces are essential to the Army's ability to perform its strategic roles in national security. These forces will be especially critical in the decade ahead, providing training and assistance to friendly foreign military forces and conducting operations in support of national policy. They are a national asset and a vital instrument of national policy.<sup>1</sup>

This is the official Army position which is reflected in a recent 1990 "draft" edition of AirLand Battle Future. For the first time in that manual, the authors write of "nation development" which is an area where SOF have demonstrated significant ability in the past. From that draft of AirLand Battle Future:

"Nation Development" forces potentially offer the largest strategic payoff for a relatively small investment in manpower. They may be employed to prevent or preempt those situations which, though less threatening, could eventually affect our access to critical regions of the world, our credibility among our allies, or the confidence of other nations reposed in our strength, abilities and resolve.<sup>2</sup>

I included this last quote, not because of what it says; but largely because of what it fails to say. How would a conventional military commander put guidance such as this into operational effect? No easy answers here. Unlike the previous edition of this capstone Army manual, today's

authors of AirLand Battle Future are trying to "come to grips" with the slippery environment characterized by LIC. The concept of "nation development" is foreign to most warfighters. The military traditionally fight wars and don't build nations.

Of special note is the reference to the possibility to "prevent or preempt situations". This statement apparently assumes a pro-active policy on the part of the United States: to be actively engaged in the "situation" in time of peace in order to "prevent or preempt" escalation to an unfavorable circumstance. The same document suggests that forces used in this environment might include: "general purpose forces (infantry, engineer, medical etc.) as well as our unique mission forces (special forces, civil affairs, etc.)."

In President Bush's 31 January 1990 State of the Union address before a joint session of Congress, he stated:

America, not just a nation, but an idea alive in the minds of people everywhere. As this new world takes shape, America stands at the center of a widening circle of freedom, today, tomorrow and into the next century."

The President continues:

In the Far East and Africa it's time for the full flowering of free governments and free markets that have served as the engine of progress... Still, we must recognize an unfortunate fact: in many regions of the world tonight the reality is conflict, not peace. Enduring animosities and opposing interests remain. And thus the cause of peace must be served by an America strong enough to defend our interests and our ideals."

The high principles expressed by Mr. Bush are demonstrative of historic American idealism. At the time of his speech, he could not have foreseen the day he would decide to commit American forces to a conflict in the Persian Gulf.

The President goes on to suggest that America's approach will be pro-active:

And, today, with Communism crumbling, our aim must be to insure democracy's advance, to take the lead in forging peace and freedom's best hope, a great and growing commonwealth of free nations."

How are the governmental organs of the United States going to "insure democracy's advance" and "to take the lead"?

The President's vision is simple enough, albeit idealistic (peace, democracy, freedom, free markets, security and stability); but how to make it a reality is an as yet unanswered political question. And, of course, what is the United States willing to pay to achieve a global "commonwealth of free nations"? No result, as the one

previously described, will come without significant costs in terms of resources, manpower and time; and because of the inherent instability in the Third World, there will no doubt be a cost in lives as well.

President Bush's ideals, as demonstrated in his speech, are generally consistent with previous presidential pronouncements on similar topics from the end of World War II. The great difference now is the fact that the preponderance of America's armed forces are no longer arrayed against the "perceived" waning Soviet threat.

If not for the potential conflict in the Persian Gulf, Congress would be currently engaged in cutting the military's budget "to the bone" and planning how to spend the "peace dividend" in spite of high sounding presidential ideals. USSOCOM is the only military command which could reasonably expect to maintain current spending levels in such an environment. After all, USSOCOM owes its existence to Congress. The "honeymoon" period can be expected to last so long as the authors who wrote the bill creating the 4 Star command are still in office.

If, as stated previously, the reasoning of the President is simple, then what is the problem? The problem comes from the difficulty in "operationalizing" that

reasoning. In other words, what is America's strategy for accomplishing those goals? The answer is, of course, problematic: currently there is no coherent and long-term national strategy for achieving stated objectives.

Coherent, in this context, means a stated strategy that is agreed to at the highest levels of government; and one which is understood by all those tasked with the responsibility for its implementation. Representative Dan Daniel's recognition of this fact led him to first support the creation of a 6th service and then a national agency to be the central organ of government: to first create, then to implement a coherent national strategy for LIC in which SOF would play a significant role.

My late Grandfather suggested to me that, "a fish often stinks from the head down". His point, although I didn't understand it at the time, was that problems at lower echelons, more often than not, spring from larger and more odious problems at the top. What currently exists at the senior civilian levels of American government is a kind of "patchwork quilt" of competing bureaucracies each with its own agenda and its own solution to foreign policy questions concerning economic, social, military and governmental assistance directed towards the Third World.

Dr. Michael Pearlman, a military historian at the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College, suggests that this circumstance is nothing new in the conduct of American actions overseas:

Aside from an occasional Eisenhower or Quincy Adams, most Americans have not appreciated the acute need to calibrate military means with national ends. In fact, synchronization has frequently conflicted with the national tendency to separate politics from diplomacy and peace from war. In place of close coordination, by mutual agreement, the State Department has usually been the lead agency during peace. In war, the armed forces took command, relegating State, in the words of its World War II Secretary, "to take care of routine foreign relations."<sup>7</sup>

Apparently the problem with developing strategies is a national difficulty and not one specific to SOF. Dr. Pearlman continues:

The goals and guidance that the national command authorities gave to the armed forces were often as unstable as the internal distribution of political power inside the United States. In 1833, Alexis de Tocqueville, the Clausewitz of domestic political theory, observed that foreign and military policies were the weakest aspects of the republic since democracies tend "to obey impulse, rather than prudence and to abandon a mature design for the gratification of a momentary passion." Strategists after World War II, updating Tocqueville's indictment, have also bemoaned America's many ethnic and interest groups, its multiple regions, races and religions, the frequency of its elections, and its Constitutional separations, diffusion, and fragmentation (what Henry Kissinger sardonically calls the 535 foreign and defense ministers elected to Congress.) One defense analyst recently wrote that "in the United States policy and strategy must proceed by innuendo, persuasion, compromise, and almost infinite negotiation and transaction."<sup>8</sup>



If Dr. Pearlman is correct, and I suspect he is, then how should American foreign policy in the Third World be developed looking into the next century? Peacetime Engagement suggests a possible answer by providing a concept upon which a strategy can be built; and more importantly, Peacetime Engagement provides a potential policy structure which can be explained to those who hold the "purse strings" - Congress.

The explanation to Congress is of great importance. Despite Congress' many failings, it is still the representative body of the people of the United States. "Pork barrel" politics aside; If Peacetime Engagement as a potential strategy for SOF employment can't be explained and subsequently justified to Congress, the concept has little future.

Many of the individual facets of Peacetime Engagement are already being practiced by regional CINCs. According to USSOCOM, SOF prior to the Persian Gulf deployment were deployed in an average of 27 countries worldwide performing such missions as the training of foreign militaries, civic actions, combined exercises and humanitarian assistance. America's regional CINCs apparently recognize the utility and potential benefits of SOF employment. If regional CINCs have found utility in

activities such as those mentioned above, what potential benefits could be derived from a national commitment suggested by the concept Peacetime Engagement?

Many foreign policy analysts would respond to the question by saying that America already possesses Third World DoS directed aid programs that include security assistance. Although the goals of these aid programs differ, an underlying philosophy in their implementation is often to foster democracy and to create a security environment where free markets can flourish. My assertion is that, in many cases, these programs are ineffective without a unifying national strategy.

The implication in the term "security environment" is that a democratic military establishment underwrites the survival of a free market and flourishing democracy. The promise of Peacetime Engagement is to assist in the creation of the former in order to insure the perpetuation of the latter. Logic dictates that democracy cannot exist in chaos and that a democratic military which recognizes civilian representative control is essential in any budding Third World democracy.

Former Secretary of State Shultz captured the global essence of America's potential future in these well chosen words:

Our national interest in promoting democratic forces requires us to take a long, hard look at the means available to us... One factor is a fundamental aspect of every situation: our own military and economic strength. Diplomatic efforts and economic assistance cannot succeed if the United States is seen as unable or unwilling to defend its ideals, its interests, and its friends."

The Secretary goes on to describe how security assistance supports this effort:

Security assistance serves a number of purposes: it helps allies and friendly countries to defend themselves and to deter threats of out-side interference; it gives us influence to help mediate conflicts; it helps sustain our access to valuable bases in strategic areas; and it gives us the opportunity to promote the importance of respecting civil government and human rights. Security assistance also enables allies and friends to accept defense responsibilities that we might otherwise have to assume ourselves-at a much greater cost in funds and manpower. Dollar for dollar, its the most cost-effective security money can buy.<sup>10</sup>

This reflects perfectly the aims of Peacetime Engagement. It seems to me that there is one major underlying goal of SOF within Peacetime Engagement, and this is it: assisting a nation in the establishment of a security environment where democracy can flourish. The strategic rationale for SOF employment is predominantly found in their capabilities and characteristics.

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## CHAPTER 4

### A STRATEGIC RATIONALE FOR SOF EMPLOYMENT

As discussed in previous chapters, the United States is, as yet, unable to develop an integrated and coherent long-range strategy for dealing with the threat posed by LIC. According to Dr. Steven Metz:

Because of the multidimensional nature of low-intensity conflict, it requires a "grand" or "total" strategy integrating military, political, psychological, ideological, and economic responses.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, the American people, and thus Congress, simply do not perceive the danger as sufficiently clear and present in order to support the kind of grand strategy required to reach the stated U.S. goals of fostering democracy and expanding free markets throughout the Third World. But a national security strategy, in support of American objectives in the Third World, and based on the employment of a Triad of U.S. Army Special Forces (SF), Civil Affairs (CA), and Psychological Operations (PSYOP), and supported by other service SOF may provide a potential answer to this dilemma. In other words, because of SOFs' extraordinary range of skills they are a viable surrogate for the lack of a national strategy for LIC.

While the American Congress was planning the reduction of America's armed forces, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait; and the single largest movement of American troops since World War II began. Had Saddam waited a few years, America might not have had the capability to come to Kuwait's aid. Even before Saddam's aggression, Secretary of Defense Cheney characterized the last 10 years of the 20th century as "the decade of uncertainty"<sup>2</sup>. But it is also true that:

...world events in the coming decade will likely be dominated by the quest for freedom and democracy. Not only have men and women the world over demonstrated the power of ideas, even after decades of oppression, but they have also shown a willingness to lay down their lives for liberty.<sup>3</sup>

The opportunities and challenges that America now faces are without parallel in history. According to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict:

Though peace and freedom are our goal, it is not always shared by others. As a result, the United States requires a flexible military force that is manned and equipped to handle a wide range of security challenges.<sup>4</sup>

Once all American troops have returned from the Persian Gulf War, Congress will again pull out its budgetary pruning shears. The armed forces are going to get smaller in an era where America does not know where the next threat will come from. This situation demands we take a look at every arrow

in our national security quiver and decide how to best use all the elements of national power we have at our disposal.

For decades, officers of the American military have bemoaned the inability of the U.S. political system to develop long-range and coherent national security strategies concerning threats beyond the USSR. Astute observers of American political culture know of the problem and know that there is no immediate solution. The American political process is too pluralistic to produce the kinds of strategies the military desire. According to two specialists:

Authority in the American political system is diffused and, at times fragmented. The division of powers in the Constitution institutionalizes some diffusion of power, but its actual extent varies according to popular attitudes and moods.<sup>2</sup>

Given this understanding, America seemingly has a disease that has no ready cure; but there is an explanation.

There are two generally well recognized characteristics of American political culture that effect the development of U.S. national security strategies. The first of these is pragmatic self-interest which is also the foundation of the international nation-state system. The interests of the United States, as with all states, usually predominate. Our security structure is designed to insure that vital strategic interests are protected. The American

deployment in support of Kuwait is at least, in part, because of oil. This self-interest is also reflected in simple business where unimpeded access to raw materials and manufactured goods is considered essential and proper.

The other characteristic of American political culture is idealism. Dr. Sam Sarkesian describes it as a "messianic spirit":

...the American people and political system are "ordained" to undertake the mission of being "the light" for other nations-lending added moral weight to their notion of democratic faith."

This attitude which may be unique among nation-states is reflected in the many presidential pronouncements made in the post World War II period which have demonstrated concern for human rights and called for fostering democracy around the globe. Americans generally believe that democracy, despite its obvious problems, is still the best form of government in comparison with all others. This idealism is reflected in American outrage over human rights abuses and the rape of Kuwait by the tyrant Saddam Hussein.

It is not unusual for these two characteristics to be seemingly at odds with one another. To para-phrase Harry Summers, idealism usually gets the worst of it. America does not immediately come to the aid of every country that is invaded or suffers from an insurgent movement; but where



self-interest and idealism clearly converge, American action at many levels can be expected, including armed intervention. This is not a moral statement but simply a recognition that because of a pluralistic and democratic government American foreign policy and resultant security strategy seems to accurately reflect American popular opinion. The American style of democracy does not promise the best government for all but only the best government for the most people. Where the two characteristics do not clearly converge, long-range and coherent security strategy development is often not possible.

According to Secretary of Defense Cheney:

Low-intensity conflict continues to be the most likely form of violence involving U.S. interests. ...We must prepare an active and timely defense against such violence, one that presents a credible deterrent and remains capable of using power when necessary. The Department (DoD) must also address the underlying causes of instability by assisting in the nation-building process..."

The immediate question is how can this be accomplished given an American political system where clarity is required in order to develop strategy? Aaron Friedberg, in an article for the Washington Quarterly, suggested that the United States consider "second best strategies". Since American popular opinion is generally against the employment of combat forces to deal with anything other than obvious threats, Dr. Friedberg's recommendation appears to make

sense. What would forces look like that would support a second best national security strategy?

First, it is imperative to remind ourselves that the Department of State (DoS), as in all foreign policy matters, has the lead in LIC. Through organizations like the U.S. Information Agency and U.S. Agency for International Development, the DoS can attempt to address Third World problems by political, psychological, and economic means. The U.S. military is the element of national power best prepared to assist in developing a stable security environment towards the accomplishment of our nation's foreign policy goals.

U.S. Army Special Operations Forces (USASOF) which for the purposes of this thesis includes SF, CA and PSYOP, supported by other service SOF, lend themselves to a "second best national security strategy" for addressing LIC because of their exceptional characteristics and capabilities. According to a report written for the Commission on Integrated Long-term Strategy:

U.S. force structure, equipment, and doctrine, designed for accustomed combatant missions, are not well-suited to pursuing non-combat roles in assisting any Third World nation.<sup>9</sup>

General purpose forces' capabilities in combat are not in question, but combat is not necessarily the objective. Army divisions, even light divisions, are ill-suited to the

preponderance of roles demanded in LIC. "Military roles in low intensity conflict are best performed by specially trained individuals or detachments..."<sup>10</sup>. SOF possess both the requisite characteristics and capabilities to operate successfully in this environment; and because SOF are recognized as being specially trained volunteers for often hazardous duties, American popular support for a strategy utilizing SOF does not present the problem that the commitment of U.S. ground combat troops does. But what are these characteristics and capabilities?

### Characteristics

According to FM 100-5, "...the low end of the conflict spectrum requires special force composition and task organization, rapid deployment, and restraint in the execution of military operation."<sup>11</sup> SOF possess all the characteristics mentioned. The 12-man special forces operational detachment, for example, is a very flexible instrument. Even if the detachment is task organized to include Civil Affairs (CA) or Psychological Operations (PSYOP) personnel; because of its small size, rapid deployment is seldom a problem. The same is true for the employment of U.S. Navy SEALs. In addition, these forces are, in the words of the report to the Commission on

Integrated Long-term Strategy, "unobtrusive". This is of great importance because:

Usually, the presence of any foreign military stirs nationalist abhorrence in a Third World country, and in some places (e.g., Central America), U.S. military forces operate encumbered by historical burdens, so that their mere presence creates political problems for a host nation."<sup>12</sup>

SOF are well practiced at operating in ways that are low in visibility. It is not at all unusual for SOF to enter a country, perform their mission in support of a host nation (HN), and then leave without their presence ever being reported in that country's media. "These soldiers, sailors, and aircrew members have been actively, effectively, and quietly engaged around the world for decades."<sup>13</sup>

Fiscal concerns are often a significant consideration when developing national security strategies. A strategy using SOF, by comparison with other kinds of forces, is cheap. Support to Third World militaries is commonly a low-technology affair. More often, such support is human resource intensive for missions like those conducted by SOF mobile training teams. According to the Security Assistance Training Management Office at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, the greatest cost incurred in accomplishing these missions is habitually for transportation. SOF regularly operate in spartan environments where per-diem costs are often low.

Unlike general purpose forces, USASOF are unusually mature. This is of critical importance. Currently, SF Branch only accepts officers for training at the grade of captain. Enlisted personnel are not permitted to apply for SF training until they are sergeants. Active duty CA and PSYOP officers normally will not complete their training and be assigned to units until they are senior captains or majors. The importance of maturity cannot be overstated. These officers and noncommissioned officers often work with Third World counter-parts who are more senior in grade. To advise and assist Third World military personnel without appearing condescending requires tact, patience and experience: all characteristics of maturity.

It is axiomatic that the best way to gain the trust of people in other lands is to attempt to speak their language. Aside from foreign area officers and some military intelligence personnel, USASOF are the only U.S. military forces trained in language skills. In fact, language ability is a prerequisite of entry into USASOF. The John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School runs its own language school for SF soldiers. Some SF officers, warrant officers and noncommissioned officers, and all PSYOP and CA officers, study languages at the well regarded Defense Language Institute for periods up to a year. Once trained, it is not unusual for these soldiers to perform

multiple tours of duty in positions and regions where their language skills are required. General purpose forces do not receive this kind of education.

Cross-cultural communications is one of the most difficult chores for any military force operating in the Third World. Cultural anthropologists will tell you that knowledge of a Third World culture is second only to language skills when it comes to creating a bond of trust towards establishing a working relationship. USASOF are trained in cross-cultural awareness. But beyond this, because SF, PSYOP and CA organizations are regionally oriented, USASOF soldiers have repetitive opportunities to reinforce and expand their knowledge throughout their careers. As a matter of policy, SF Branch attempts to assign officers to positions and locations where language and cultural skills will be reinforced.

PSYOP and CA officers undergo an especially long and rigorous training program which includes a graduate degree, and not only language, but an in-depth regional studies course of instruction as well. The entire training program may take over two years to complete. And, according to the CA and PSYOP assignments officer at the U.S. Army Personnel Command, they too will perform repetitive tours of duty in

regions and positions requiring their linguistic and regional skills.

### Capabilities

It is the characteristics of USASOF that give them an extraordinary range of capabilities in high, mid as well as low-intensity conflict environments. SF skills have recently been proven on the mid-intensity battlefield in Iraq - performing direct action, special reconnaissance, and other special activity missions. According to a report on Cable News Network (CNN), PSYOP leaflets were found on the majority of Iraqi prisoners of war who surrendered to coalition forces. CA personnel are currently in the process of assisting the Kuwaitis rebuild their country. It is not my intent to regurgitate the missions of USASOF here. Field manuals provide an excellent source for those who are interested. Instead, it may be more useful to highlight the most likely USASOF mission area in LIC in order to illuminate my central thesis: that being Foreign Internal Defense (FID).

First, I wish to highlight the fact that USASOF possess extraordinary capabilities as trainers and advisers. Methods of instruction are a significant part of SF basic

skills. This is very important, and has to do with what should be America's philosophical approach to assisting Third World nations attain freedom, democracy and stability. It is plain common sense that governments and political cultures do not change rapidly without violence. Even though the U.S. has demonstrated a willingness to use violence in order to achieve its objectives, nonviolent means are preferred in almost every case. America desires a stable world where democratic change can occur gradually with the least potential disruption. Such disruption is too often measured in terms of human lives lost.

Third world nations have to solve their own unique problems without intrusive, and often overbearing, U.S. intervention. SOF, acting as trainers and advisers, in support of a FID mission (believed by most experts to be their most likely role), can go into a country experiencing security problems (e.g. an insurgency), and acting in the roles of trainers and advisers assist in the attempt to stem the tide of violence. American lives will occasionally be lost, as in El Salvador; but this is a price the American people have been seemingly willing to bear. Americans recognize that SOF volunteers are significantly different from regular soldiers. Americans know that SOF have accepted unusual risks inherent in performing their various missions. This is especially important when one considers



America's difficulty in developing a national strategy for addressing LIC. The employment of SOF in times of relative peace is acceptable to the people of the United States and supports the use of a "second best strategy" given the constraints of the American political system.

Counter-narcotics, although not a formal mission area historically for SOF, is becoming one. "By the direction of the Secretary of Defense, the Department is substantially engaged in the national fight against illegal drugs."<sup>14</sup> Narcotics also threaten other nations: "...drug trafficking constitutes a clear and present danger to the very survival of democracy in certain countries long friends and allies of the United States."<sup>15</sup> There is little question that the American people generally support DoD involvement in the war on drugs, but the drug war's efficacy to date is in question. Although some SOF activities are classified, it is known that they are currently engaged in training and advising Third World militaries in their attempt to stem the flow of narco-trafficking. SOF are also engaged in training Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) personnel in some of the techniques of counter-guerrilla warfare. Guerrilla tactics have in some cases been adopted by narco-traffickers.

Although the problems of Third World insurgency and narcotics-trafficking seem dissimilar at first glance, upon deeper examination the potential solution for both may be remarkably the same. According to two experts, "... both insurgency and narcotrafficking have similar root causes and are susceptible to similar countercampaigns."<sup>16</sup> America's military has been predominantly focused on the attempt to stem the flow of illegal drugs into the United States through air, sea and land interdiction; but the most effective way to halt the drugs aside from diminishing demand, is to attack and eliminate the sources of drugs found mostly in the Third World.

The joining of forces between the drug cartels and insurgent movements in Central and South America highlights the problem. In the words of one knowledgeable officer, "SOF help provide a balanced response of social development, training and interdiction which... will have a significant impact on the present U.S. cocaine epidemic."<sup>17</sup> This officer shares my opinion that demand reduction is the best policy to follow; but if that is not possible, a "second best strategy" supported by SOF has considerable utility.

"Winning hearts and minds" is an often quoted phrase. These days it is mentioned sometimes derisively; but if there is a central theme to the goals of the U.S. in

the Third World, I believe this phrase captures it. It is the oppressed peoples in many countries of the Third World who long for something better than that proposed by tyrants or Marxist insurgents. It is characteristic of tyrants and successful insurgent groups to control their press and brutally suppress dissent. According to FM 33-1, Psychological Operations, Army PSYOP elements in FID support:

- \* Assisting the HN in gaining the support of its people.
- \* Assisting the HN in defeating the insurgents.
- \* Establishing a favorable U.S. image in the HN.
- \* Favorably influencing neutral groups and the world community.
- \* Assisting the HN in supporting defector rehabilitation programs.
- \* Providing close and continuous PSYOP support to maximize the effect of CA operations.<sup>12</sup>

Saddam Hussein used his control of the Iraqi media for over a decade in order to control his population successfully. PSYOP can be an extraordinary tool of America in attempting to get the truth to those people suffering oppression. Through organic print, audio, and visual media, PSYOP units in concert with USIA can assist either fledgling democracies or democratic insurgent movements develop PSYOP campaigns aimed at demonstrating to the people of a Third World country the legitimacy of the democratic cause. It is, after all, the people who decide whether or not their government is legitimate; but in order to do so, they have to be told the truth.

There is another component to winning hearts and minds. That is the component possibly best addressed by CA. According to an initial draft of Joint Pub 3-57, Doctrine for Joint Civil Affairs:

Use of CA assets in support of special operations (SO) is most likely to occur in foreign internal defense (FID) and unconventional warfare (UW) operations...<sup>12</sup>

A fledgling democracy may have significant difficulties in attempting to redress the legitimate complaints of disenfranchized classes and ethnic or religious minorities. Given the poverty of much of the Third World, this is not surprising. CA advisers, supporting USAID, can provide valuable technical expertise in developing national infrastructures to address the root causes of popular discontent within the capabilities of the host nation.

#### Other Army SOF

The USASOF umbrella also encompasses Rangers, SO Aviation, Delta Anti-Terrorist forces, and other special mission units. Dependant upon the nature of the security threat to a Third World nation, these forces are ready and available at short notice. They differ from SF, CA, and PSYOP units because they are not regionally oriented. They are predominantly strike forces. Their utility in LIC is unquestioned. U.S. anti-terrorist forces, beyond their

obvious role, can train Third World militaries in anti-terrorist tactics. SO aviation, because of their advanced avionics, night operations training, air refueling capability, and ability to work in relatively unsophisticated support environments, obviously possess significant capabilities in support of a Third World HN suffering an insurgent movement. Ranger battalions are America's premier strike units, but they possess limited utility beyond their primary mission in the environment generally characterized by LIC.

#### Other Service SOF and Command and Control

The Navy's SEAL forces represent a significant asset in strike capability involving near beach and riverine operations. In the past, they have been used sparingly as trainers and advisers to Third World militaries because they currently lack both language and cultural training giving them generally less utility in support of Third World HNs.

Personnel of the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) are specially trained and habitually work with USASOF. They support USASOF in a multitude of mission areas, including counter-narcotics, and are largely self-contained for internal support. They are accustomed to

working in austere environments characterized by the Third World. Again, it is not my intent to review the mission capabilities of the assets of AFSOC. Service manuals are available to those interested. For my purposes, it is only important to note that USASOF depends on the support of AFSOC assets for infiltration, exfiltration, resupply, and numerous other special activities.

It is the habitual working relationship between USASOF and AFSOC, and their relatively new command and control architecture that I wish to highlight. By order of the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act, as modified by the Nunn-Cohen Amendment, Special Operations Commands (SOCs) were formed under each of the combatant CinCs. These new commands have all service SOF assigned. This new command and control relationship further strengthens the working relationships of multi-service SOF. All SOF in a given theater work for the same boss. They operate under the same employment principles. Under a SOC, all service SOF have unity of command. This situation will, without question, improve overall SOF mission capabilities and employment characteristics.

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## CHAPTER 5

### WHY AMERICA SHOULD PURSUE A SOF STRATEGY IN AFRICA

The majority of nations in Africa were still under colonial rule in 1950, but decolonization came rapidly after; and by 1967 most of the former colonies achieved independence. Unfortunately, many of the new African nations did not possess even rudimentary governmental infrastructures. The competing political paradigms of democratic-capitalism and Marxist-Leninism vied for influence and in some cases fueled domestic tribal animosities that can still be seen today.

In some cases, lacking trained and educated populations, economic and governmental structures, and saddled with national borders imposed by former European rulers, the post-colonial period of African development was tumultuous. A great deal of political discord continues. Much of the African continent remains plagued with over-population in some regions and under-population in others, disease is common in the central region (predominantly sleeping sickness and AIDs), famine remains a life threatening dilemma for millions (particularly in the north-east), radical Islam is currently making rulers of the

Arabized North and East African countries uncomfortable, and the state of South Africa continues on the road towards potential racial warfare.

Despite its enormous problems, Africa is a region which simply can't be ignored. According to a DoS discussion paper:

For the United States, Africa represents:

- \* The political force of the world's largest regional bloc;
- \* A rich source of natural resources;
- \* The ancestral home of 25 million Americans;
- \* A growing market for American exports;
- \* An opportunity to demonstrate through private enterprise and government-to-government aid, that democratic institutions and individual initiative provide a better solution to the problems of the Third World than do totalitarianism and economic regimentation; and
- \* Possibilities for our adversaries to exploit regional tensions and foster insecurity through the indiscriminate provision of arms and support for violent solutions to local conflicts.<sup>1</sup>

### The Pragmatic Argument

There are both pragmatic and moral reasons for being engaged in Africa; but for the moment, let us concentrate on matters of national self-interest. The African continent is over 3 times the size of the United States and possesses tremendous natural mineral resources. These mineral resources constitute much of the "grist" upon which modern societies depend. Diamonds, oil, chromium, and platinum are

just a few of the mineral resources critical to an industrial and ever more technical nation such as America. From a purely self-interested perspective, the United States must remain engaged on the continent.

Africa contains a veritable treasure house of the known world reserves of the following:

chromium 97%, cobalt 68%, diamonds 92%, manganese 59%, platinum 78%, tantalum 69%, and vanadium 49%. Annual U.S. mineral needs equal 10 trillion pounds a year. That equates to nearly 2 tons of metals for each citizen. Mineral imports account for approximately 25 to 30 billion dollars of imports every year. The U.S. is more than 50% dependent for 23 of 40 essential minerals.<sup>2</sup>

According to Kenneth Kessel's book on strategic minerals, four are strategically essential: they are chromium, manganese, cobalt, and platinum.

These four have few or no good substitutes, are essential to the production of important weapons or key industrial processes, and are located primarily in countries of questionable supply reliability-southern Africa and the USSR.<sup>3</sup>

U.S. dependence is such that Congress passed the Strategic Minerals Stockpiling Act in 1979. The act was precipitated by a Congressional finding that stated: "Domestic resources for some materials cannot support military, industrial, and essential civilian needs for national defense."<sup>4</sup> The act:

Provides that strategic and critical materials be stockpiled in the interest of national defense to preclude costly and dangerous dependence upon foreign sources of supply in times of national emergency."

A March 31, 1989 review of the status of American stockpiling efforts under the aforementioned legislation reveals significant shortages in many of the minerals plentiful in Africa such as cobalt, manganese, chromium and others. In way of explanation: cobalt is essential in the manufacture of jet engines; steel cannot be made without manganese; and chromium makes the creation of stainless steel possible. All these minerals are found in abundance on the continent of Africa.

It can be assumed that American dependence on African mineral resources will grow in the future. Superior American war-fighting technology was in large part responsible for Saddam Hussein's defeat in the Persian Gulf War. The effectiveness of those many high-tech weapons is no longer in doubt. Given this circumstance, further growth in technology oriented weaponry made in many cases from African minerals can be expected. According to two experts:

...it seems reasonable to require that U.S. foreign policy reflect the importance of maintaining the independence and freedom of action of major U.S. supplier nations, as well as the importance of continued U.S. access to key strategic and critical raw materials, whatever their source."

### The Moral Argument

Additionally, and possibly just as important, America has moral imperatives which should drive future U.S. interests in Africa. America, like many of Africa's former colonial rulers, suffers from a history pock-marked by racial bigotry and attendant prejudice. The American Civil War after 1863, with President Lincoln's embrace of the Emancipation Proclamation, was fought over the issue of black slavery. The United States to this date is still trying to attain the goal of a color-blind society. Additionally, 25 million Americans have ethnic roots in Africa. As the world's "moral leader" after the apparent fall of Communism, can the United States afford to ignore future African economic, governmental and social development? From a purely practical perspective, the job is too big for DoS alone.

America also has historical ties with a number of African nations. A few examples will illustrate my point. Morocco was the first nation to recognize the independence of the United States from Great Britain and has maintained a close and mutually beneficial relationship ever since. Liberia was founded by freed American slaves. Their capital, Monrovia, was named for a former U.S. President. Egypt, although not always a friend to America, now receives more U.S. economic and military aid than all other countries

except Israel. Egypt was also a staunch ally in America's recent war with Iraq. America has maintained generally friendly relations with Zaire, as well as other non-democratic African countries. And, Africa's newest nation, Namibia, was founded with the support of the U.S. working through the United Nations.

America also has an interest in the growth and perpetuation of human rights. The United Nations "Universal Declaration of Human Rights", of which the United States is not only a signatory, but one of the primary authors, reads remarkably like the American Constitution. The Declaration recognizes:

...the inherent dignity and ...equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family... (And), ...as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law."

Americans might do well to remember that without support from France, America might never have succeeded in its revolution. Although difficult to imagine now, the 13 colonies could have lost their war with the English had not the French fleet blockaded British shipping and French troops assisted General George Washington. Americans might also do well to remember that the most revolutionary words ever put to paper can be found in America's "Declaration of Independence". Freedom, justice, and the inherent dignity of the individual are words that echo back at us from the

Baltic States, Eastern Europe, and Asia as well as Africa. American support to democracy in the Third World is a moral imperative.

### The Argument For A SOF Strategy In Africa

The larger question from the perspective of my thesis may be: what is the strategic rationale for a U.S. SOF presence in Africa? It is obvious that the continent is still suffering from the throes of de-colonization and the after-effects of the Cold War. Ethiopia, Angola, and Somalia have been a few of the African pawns in the "great game" between the U.S. and USSR. Military support provided to Ethiopia by the USSR turned that country into an armed camp and allowed it to prosecute wars in Eritrea and the Ogaden. Cuban troops, supported by Soviet technicians and advisers, have only recently been withdrawn from Angola.

Additionally, some former colonial powers are still engaged on the continent. According to one expert:

France has maintained a major military presence in Africa... It has been the continent's second largest supplier of arms, providing some 9% of North Africa's and 30% of sub-Saharan Africa's requirements..."

But France is hardly the only player. Great Britain:

...crushed mutinies which almost overthrew the established governments of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania... It maintains small military training teams in a number of Commonwealth African countries..."

My only point in mentioning the two countries above is to demonstrate that other western nations have interests and obligations in Africa, and that there is little America might do there in the future that will not involve other actors - possibly in coalition towards the attainment of mutual goals.

The recent success of coalition forces in Iraq leads one to ask the question: might similar coalitions be possible in future political as well as military activities? SOF, because of their language abilities, have extraordinary capability when used in coalition with other nation's forces. In fact, SF detachments were attached to Arab battalions in the Persian Gulf War for just this reason. Early and informal reports from friends and acquaintances suggest that they were extremely successful.

The question of forward deployed forces is a thorny political question in American politics. Whether or not the U.S. will continue to maintain significant military forces overseas into the 21st Century is yet to be determined. I simply want to make a case that an American SOF presence in Africa, either forward deployed or on a temporary and



intermittent basis, may be in the long term interests of America. Based on the rationale presented in chapter 4, it should be clear that SOF are generally the best trained forces available to operate on the continent of Africa as well as the in remainder of the Third World.

The kinds of wars that have been fought across the continent also support the use of SOF. A majority of armed conflicts in Africa since de-colonization have been guerrilla-type wars. These have been primarily low-technology insurgencies which are the "bread and butter" of SOF. Whether in support of a fledgling democracy or in support of a democratic insurgent movement, SOF are the best troops available to help either achieve their goals.

The new opportunities are significant. Not the least of these is the opportunity to set an example for African military establishments. By their mere presence in a Third World environment, large conventional American armed forces often have negative effects. One need not look any farther than the Phillipines for an example. The population of the Phillipines has sometimes politically polarized over the conventional American military presence in their land.

Circumstances have changed. That polarization was against the backdrop of super-power competition. The Soviet

Union is now less a player and more a bystander. Democracy, in its many forms, is the only successful political paradigm left which African nations might come to emulate. According to one knowledgeable observer, the move towards democracy in Africa is well under-way:

The new Africa is moving away from the view that the state can solve all ills-toward recognition of the important role of the individual and the community in generating and sustaining growth. Rulers of the new Africa are coming to realize that political stability is won by establishing participatory governments which respect the rights of individuals.<sup>10</sup>

Even with some African democratic movements well under-way, SOF either permanently forward deployed, or on temporary duty, can train, advise, and assist African militaries without the many of the odious political ramifications that attend the employment of large conventional forces. Additionally, it is often times the military in Third World nations that hold the real keys to power. SOF military-to-military contact can provide an example for other democratically minded military establishments. According to a draft of the President's forthcoming National Security Strategy: "In today's environment, these contacts have taken on even greater importance."<sup>11</sup>

Unlike the American political-military experience with sharp divisions between power blocs, it is common in

Africa for the military to play a much larger role in domestic politics. This circumstance need not necessarily be bad. An African army which has been trained in total, or in part by American SOF could eventually come to accept great civilian political dominance. This is no easy task, but the example set by America's military can come to be the model to emulate.

Also, because of the nature of many African as well as other Third World cultures, it is person-to-person contact that is the most valued and long lasting. The American notion that a one-time deployment of troops can solve the security problems of a fledgling democracy is absurd. Only long-term and consistent American policies which encourage democracy in foreign militaries as well as populaces can be expected to bear fruit.

Philosophically, it must be accepted that the United States may sometimes fail in these attempts as was the case in Liberia with Samuel Doe. There are no absolute answers and no guarantees of success. Where human beings are concerned it is difficult if not impossible for American policy makers to determine a Third World leader's commitment to democratic principles. All that I would suggest is that for both pragmatic and moral reasons, the attempt should be made; and as the syndicated columnist George Will suggested

concerning the people of the Third World: "The business of America is justice and securing the blessings of liberty."<sup>12</sup>

The time for African democracy may be here.

According to Robert Fatton Jr. in the Political Science Quarterly:

Too many times they (Africans) have seen and suffered the consequences of broken promises; too many times they have experienced a politics of coups and countercoups that alters nothing except the faces of embezzlers; too many times they have been devoured by causes and leaders they have supported and embraced.<sup>13</sup>

Democracy, eventually, and supported by the United States, may be many African nation's best hope for a stable and just future.

Up to this point in my thesis, I have discussed the innumerable problems associated with America's development of a long-term and coherent strategy for dealing with the threat posed in LIC. I have also examined the reasons why this problem exists given the sometimes conflicting streams in American political thought: pragmatic self-interest and idealism. I further offered a potential solution to the difficulty through the employment of SOF because of their unique characteristics and capabilities. Essentially, what I have attempted to do is answer the question: why SOF?

Yet, in order for a more complete understanding of the whole of these assertions, I am compelled to address another question: that being how SOF? In other words, given the understanding of my presentation to this point, how are SOF going to accomplish Assistant Secretary Locher's goals of "counteracting violence and nation-building" within his strategic concept of Peacetime Engagement? Remember that Peacetime Engagement includes the utilization of all the elements of national power as well as other types of military forces in a LIC setting.

## Endnotes

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## CHAPTER 6

### SOF SUPPORT IN COUNTERACTING VIOLENCE

Since the end of World War II, the United States focused on the objective of deterring Soviet aggression through the employment of massive troop concentrations in Europe. When the Soviets initiated support to Marxist insurgent movements in the Third World, the United States responded with FID doctrine as discussed briefly in Chapter 4. In many ways, American national security strategies during that period placed emphasis on security assistance support to anti-communist regimes sometimes regardless of their human rights record. In the U.S., the very word "insurgency" was nearly always linked with Marxist ideology. As such, the term insurgency received a bad name. It is time to re-think American priorities.

It is clear that one way to counteract violence is with a bullet. It can be argued that forcing Saddam Hussein from Kuwait was done with this methodology. We may never know how many Iraqis died to feed Saddam's megalomania. It is clear that many tyrants can be forced from their positions in only one way. They have to be physically and violently removed from power. This of course creates a paradox for American policy-makers. Counteracting violence,

conceptually, is dependant upon a subjective point of view. In other words, if the cause is just, then the use of violence to counter violence is right and proper.

My assumption is that the U.S., unconstrained by bipolar considerations, can now act internationally in accord with the principles found in both the Constitution and Bill of Rights, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. If this is the case, then the American cause can be judged just. Americans perceive themselves as a peace-loving people who have been compelled by circumstances to engage in numerous wars in this century: most recently, Grenada, Panama, and Iraq. The wars of the last 10 years have been of relatively short duration and enjoyed the general support of the American people. Some commentators are even touting the end of America's trauma concerning the Vietnam War.

If this is true, and I think it likely, then America's course into the next century is already set. My intent is to take the time to look forward into the next century and to apply my own knowledge, and that of others, to the new strategic context. I will also examine counteracting violence as the first phase of Peacetime Engagement's two-pronged strategy for addresssing LIC threats for potential efficacy. In order to achieve its'



goals in an ever more multi-polar world, SOF will play a crucial role. Again, my focus will be Africa; but I believe my reasoning could be applied in any region of the globe.

With the demise of Communism as a philosophy of governing, it can be expected that democracy will grow in the Third World. Marxism has proven itself bankrupt. The Marxist based governments still in power, like Ethiopia, use the social aspects of Communism as an excuse to deny people their freedom and human rights. Mengistu in Ethiopia is a brutal dictator who deserves no more consideration than Adolf Hitler or Saddam Hussein. Possibly the larger question from America's perspective is: should the U.S. be the world's policeman?

I would suggest that America already plays that role - like it or not! Why? Because America is the only power currently capable of it. The UN is too pluralistic to act and represents too many conflicting interests. NATO's charter is too narrowly focused inside Europe with no mandate to address out-of-sector threats. Both Germany and Japan, although mighty economic powers, still suffer from the harsh memories of their World War II pasts. Their societies are largely inward looking. Neither do they possess the messianic spirit of Americans.

Native American idealism may be the critical ingredient concerning the prediction that I am about to make: that the next century will see the rise of democratic resistance movements against tyrants of all kinds, and that the U.S. will engage in the support of those movements which fit a democratic profile. This of course is in addition to continuing support to democratic governments fighting insurgencies, terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and subversion.

Not surprisingly, the U.S. forces best suited to assist democratic resistance groups are SOF. In fact, unconventional warfare (support to an insurgency) is one of the primary missions of SOF. Counter-insurgency (COIN) doctrine - under the heading of FID, and support to an insurgency - under the heading of unconventional warfare (UW) are two sides of the same nickel. The USASOF Triad is effective in support of an insurgent movement for precisely the same reasons they are effective in support of a government that is fighting an insurgency. One 12-man Special Forces Detachment is doctrinally capable of raising, training and equipping a guerrilla battalion. CA and PSYOP personnel, work towards the goal of winning the support of the people of a Third World nation over to the democratic cause of the insurgents.

Potential U.S. support to resistance movements is not as radical an idea as some might think. America supported the Mujeheddein resistance in Afghanistan against the Soviets, the CONTRAS against the decidedly non-democratic Sandinistas of Nicaragua, and the forces of Jonas Savimbi against the Marxist regime of Dos Santos in Angola; but in each of these cases, America's underlying rationale was always anti-communism.

U.S. support for truly indigenous democratic resistance movements or support to counterinsurgency can be based not on simple anti-communism, but on truly democratic ideals to counter oppressive or exploitive authoritarian forces from both the right and the left.<sup>1</sup>

In the "new world order", America's underlying rationale for support to insurgent groups might be the growth and maintenance of human rights.

This opinion is based upon both idealistic and pragmatic reasoning. Experience has shown that Democracy best protects the rights of individuals as well as ethnic and religious groups. Essentially and succinctly this is the moral argument that supports American political, economic, and military aid to democratic resistance movements, as well as aid to fledgling democratic governments. Yet, the pragmatic argument may be more compelling from the perspective of future Americans.

An examination of the last century of warfare demonstrates that totalitarian forms of government are more often the aggressors. Democracies seldom engage in war without justifiable cause, and those wars are normally thrust upon them. Both world wars began because of the expansionist and ever more aggressive German totalitarian state. Imperial Japan also fits this mold; and, "...in Grenada and Panama. We (America) ended the reigns of a Marxist dictator and a drug dealer."<sup>2</sup> Saddam Hussein drove this point home with a vengeance. Democracies can normally only engage in war when the threat is sufficient to convince a preponderance of the population that it is necessary and warranted. A world full of democracies which engages in mutually beneficial and peaceful economic competition could make war anathema, and permit the UN to act in accord with its' charter.

The UN was recently tested as a body in the Persian Gulf War. For the first time since the Korean Conflict it actually performed one of the roles it was designed for. The UN gave a multi-national political and military coalition, led by the U.S., the backing required to push Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait. According to a recent draft of the President's National Security Strategy:

"With the end of the Cold War, the potential for multilateral organizations has been unfettered, and none has been more clearly relevant than the United Nations."<sup>3</sup>

This suggests that future political and military coalitions with UN backing are not only possible, but likely. This of course presupposes convergent multi-national interests.

The reason why I have chosen to describe Peacetime Engagement as a concept is because it possesses only an outline of a potential ways and means. Its' importance rests upon what it could potentially accomplish if solidified into a genuine strategy. Two staffers in Mr. Locher's office view the military component's role in counteracting violence in these terms:

...DoD can support specific missions directed at countering terrorism, drug trafficking, insurgencies, and subversion. With increased political stability, Peacetime Engagement then can be supported thorough Security Assistance programs such as advising foreign troops, military education programs (e.g., IMET), and foreign military sales (FMS). It also can be supported through humanitarian assistance, civil affairs, psychological operations, and disaster relief programs.<sup>4</sup>

It is worth noting that all the programs mentioned currently exist and operate under general DoD and DoS supervision. There is little new here except for the allusion that the programs be better coordinated for best effect under the guidelines of a strategy like Peacetime Engagement. In SOF, the United States possesses the capability to successfully perform the missions or counter the threats outlined in the previous paragraph. What America lacks is the national will to do it unless the

country in question: (1) requests assistance, and (2) it is clearly in the national interest to provide that assistance.

What of cases where it is not a country requesting American help but a democratic insurgent movement? This is an area not specifically addressed by Peacetime Engagement. I think it is clear why Secretary Locher chose not to mention such support. Here America's choices are more problematic. The United Nations Charter was conceived by, and written for, nation-states. Under international law, the issues are complex and do not generally favor the insurgents. Adding to the complexity, "...neither side of a civil war is likely to be a clear cut choice; the opponents usually come in shades of gray."

But when the choice is clear and where American interests and idealism converge, counteracting violence is a reasonable first step towards assisting either insurgents or a fledgling democracy achieve the goal of a pluralistic and just political system.

Under very few circumstances should such assistance be covert. "In our robust kind of democracy, we are not capable of hiding our role in operations and any significant size." There is no question that some forms of special

operations need to be covert (e.g. counter-terrorist activities); but the vast majority of potential SO missions in LIC only require low visibility. Again, so long as it is in the national interest and consistent with American ideals, national will is not likely to be in question. Additionally, unobtrusiveness works in two ways: within the HN and within the U.S. SOF working quietly in Africa as they have been for decades provide little cause for concern either in Africa or at home.

Additionally, if both American pragmatic self-interest and idealism are convergent towards a given country, then U.S. security assistance can be viewed as preventive in nature. One of the goals of Peacetime Engagement is "to avoid direct and costly involvement of U.S. military forces in conventional combat."7 In other words, The USASOF Triad, supported by other service SOF, can potentially be a preemptive military tool to counteract violence in an attempt to preclude the more direct and more politically sensitive application of military power.

If prevention fails, more drastic military action may be required than the employment of SOF. This may include the commitment of general purpose forces. If such were to become the case, SOF personnel and units could be of extraordinary assistance to conventional commanders before,

during, and after the campaign. A few examples should suffice, e.g. SOF can collect intelligence information, secure landing and drop zones, destroy important targets, and coordinate with local military and civilian authorities for indigenous support. The potential success of any conventional campaign could well hinge on SOF units and personnel already in-country. Of course, if Peacetime Engagement is successful, such occasions would be rare.

Time is also a crucial factor. According to Secretary Locher, "...low-intensity conflict is, in most cases protracted." Whether it is support to insurgency or counterinsurgency, in order to settle disputes of this kind often takes many years and sometimes decades. The United States has not dedicated forward deployed army divisions for periods as long as this to any regions other than Europe in support of NATO, and Korea. These forces are configured for clear-cut conventional conflict. Because of this, and according to Dr. Sam Sarkesian, "Special Forces are best suited for the more difficult and long-range commitments of revolution and counterrevolution..." This supports a forward deployed posture for SOF when it is feasible.

There is still one other consideration that warrants mentioning. Any democratic insurgent movement worthy of



U.S. support must be able to sustain itself and grow in sufficient strength to demonstrate domestic popular support before U.S. assistance should begin. The American character is one which places a great deal of stress on winning. Before U.S. support begins, there must be a reasonable assurance that the eventual outcome will be in America's favor.

Let us examine briefly a possible future in Zaire in order to illustrate my point. Since independence, the former Belgian Congo underwent significant violence including UN intervention over the issue of Katangan succession. Ultimately the issue was settled and Joseph Desiree Mobutu rose to near absolute power. The nation is hardly democratic, and yet America has maintained generally congenial ties with Mobutu against the backdrop of "containment". What is likely to occur when Mobutu dies or is overthrown? The possibility of a civil war cannot be ruled-out.

Should a democratically-minded insurgency evolve that is able to demonstrate popular appeal against a repressive replacement regime, America could become involved. Because no vital strategic interests are involved in Zaire, the commitment of the 82nd Airborne Division is unlikely and potentially counter-productive.

Close association with the United States and a visible (emphasis added) American presence may be the "kiss of death" to indigenous leaders. At the least, such relationships reduce the sense of independence and self-determination which are essential ingredients for indigenous systems...<sup>10</sup>

This may suggest that a strategy heavily dependent upon SOF are the best forces to pursue U.S. goals in the Third World and not a "second best strategy" after all.

Dependent upon when (which stage) of the insurgency the U.S. enters the fray, will determine the kind of support necessary to see the insurgency succeed. The USASOF Triad possesses the inherent flexibility to have any one of its parts perform the lead role. DoS cannot perform this function in support of an insurgency. Although without question, DoS should set the political agenda which will guide the military throughout the conflict.

Regardless of the stage of the insurgency, allow me to suggest that all three USASOF elements are required to be successful: PSYOP propaganda development which emphasizes the rightness of the democratic cause, in concert with the SF military training of insurgent forces which stresses discipline and justice, and supported by CA civic action programs which provides proof behind the words is a powerful combination. In fact, SF mission preparation automatically includes planning for both CA and PSYOP in FID as well as UW.

Of course, USASOF cannot perform its' missions without the assistance of elements of AFSOC which provides air support for resupply, air cover, combat search and rescue, sensing platforms, and insertion and extraction. Near beach and riverine operations in support of an insurgent group are best performed by the forces the U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command (the SEALs and Special Boat Units). Remember, Zaire is home to the Congo River.

One of the most often mentioned problems in dealing with LIC threats is the difficulty in developing good intelligence.

Experience has demonstrated that good intelligence is the most important element when responding to low-intensity conflict-both in framing a response to the particular case and in execution of the plan.<sup>11</sup>

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) which is over all responsible for collection does a fine job with political and economic analysis. Unfortunately, neither the CIA nor the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) focus a significant number of their assets towards collecting the kinds of intelligence required by SOF.

Although satellites were extremely useful in spotting Iraqi troop concentrations and SCUD missile launching sites in the recent war, national technical intelligence collection means are woefully inadequate as a

means of determining whether or not a people possess the will to fight. According to Robert Unger, "special operations (intelligence gatherers) filled the vacuum"<sup>12</sup>, left by the national intelligence agencies.

Human intelligence (HUMINT) may be preer nent in LIC. HUMINT is the term used to describe intelligence collection done by people. "In no other confict does the personal aspect of intelligence gathering become so significant."<sup>13</sup> SOF does not necessarily require in-depth knowledge of a Third World country's economic or political policies. What they do require is in-depth knowledge of how a people think and reason. SOF also require information of a type which would be considered tactical intelligence by a conventional commander.

"What may be tactical intelligence in a conventional war may have significant operational and even strategic importance within the low-intensity conflict environment."<sup>14</sup>

For instance: an SF detachment assisting a guerrilla group to plan a raid on an enemy installation might need information concerning guard schedules, the kinds of locks on doors, the thickness of walls, and enemy arms. Not only does the CIA and DIA not collect information of this kind, but it is doubtful that the agency could do it even if it were tasked to do so.

Fortunately, SOf possesses organic HUMINT collection capabilities that can fill the vacuum left by the national intelligence services. The John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School runs a long and intensive Operations and Intelligence Course for specially selected senior sergeants. Much of the course focuses on HUMINT operations. The SF Officer Qualification Course teaches potential SF detachment commanders how to direct these operations.

Additionally, PSYOP units in peacetime prepare in-depth PSYOP studies of potential target groups throughout the Third World in order to assess their vulnerability to different kinds of propaganda campaigns. CA units and personnel, although not active collectors of intelligence information, have extraordinary utility in passive collection. This simply means that because CA personnel work closely with native peoples in civic action projects, they often come to hear information of potential use to either SF or PSYOP operators.

The USASOF Triad is a fully integrated whole. All 3 components are initially trained under the auspices of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. Then they serve under the command of the new U.S. Army Special Operations Command. When in theater, they all work for the SOC Commander. This kind of organizational

structure insures unity of command which is a principle of war and a recognized essential element of any successful military operation.

In the case of Zaire, if the U.S. should come to support a democratic insurgent movement, the Commanding General Special Operations Command Europe would become a major player: but because his area of responsibility mirrors that of Commander in Chief, Europe, (CINCEUR), and includes most of Africa and all of Europe, a subordinate commander and operational structure is required to perform all in-country command and control of military forces. Obviously, given the training, preparation, and skills of SOF, I am compelled to recommend a SOF commander for that role. Dependant upon the circumstances, either a task organized SF group or battalion could perform the function. Task organization would include CA and PSYOP companies and possibly intelligence, engineer, signal, medical, and military police units.

Of course, the organization would constitute a joint task force of SOF. Air and naval assets would be attached under the operational control of the special operations joint task force commander (an SF group or battalion commander). Other service assets would be assigned from SOCEUR. If in-theater SOC Air and naval assets are

insufficient to the need, USSOCOM which commands all CONUS based SOF can provide additional forces. If required, SO aviation, Rangers, and anti-terrorist forces are available for attachment should circumstances dictate and the political climate allows.

The same kind of joint SOF organization is potentially just as effective in FID as unconventional warfare. In FID operations, the organization I described was formerly known as a Joint Security Assistance Task Force (JSATF). In UW, the organization is called a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF). In either case, DoS sets the tenor of military operations. Political dominance must be insured throughout.

To assist a Third World nation battling subversion requires the same kinds of force capabilities found in SOF. In order to help, first you must understand the cultural context in which the subversion is taking place. It is hoped that I have made a sufficiently strong case that SOF, because of their characteristics and capabilities, are the right forces to work in the confusing environment of LIC.

Regardless of the nature of the threat to an allied or friendly country suffering from internal security problems, once the political decision is made to provide

assistance, SOF can play a crucial role in counteracting violence. Of course once the violence has ended, Peacetime Engagement's second phase begins.



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## CHAPTER 7

### SOF SUPPORT IN NATION-BUILDING

Nation-building, the second phase of Peacetime Engagement, requires a long-term commitment on the part of the United States. Once an insurgency is defeated or a repressive regime overthrown, the work is only half done. Like counteracting violence, the focus of nation-building is "helping others to help themselves". Unobtrusiveness is again of paramount importance. People who are first able to defeat their enemy and then struggle to create a democratic government, should be permitted to be proud of their accomplishment. An American presence which is too large or does too much uni-laterally can actually be counter-productive.

CA is the obvious lead military element in nation-building, but the job of SF and PSYOP are not over; they simply play greater supporting roles. PSYOP continues to train indigenous personnel in PSYOP techniques: not to control people's minds, but to help educate the populace concerning the mechanics of a democracy. SF continues to train the military to insure that the state security environment remains stable and is able to protect the people from external as well as internal threats.

CA can accomplish what sometimes DoS cannot. Because CA is military and as such is subordinate to DoD, it has a vast number of resources which are potentially available for use that DoS cannot hope to match. For instance, CA personnel can coordinate for conventional armed services medical and engineer support that would not be available from any other agency of government. Projects of this kind are on-going around the globe nearly all the time. Every regional CinC possesses assets that can be used in this way. An added bonus in such projects is the training the soldiers receive in the process.

Additionally and more readily available are the 2 medics who are part of every SF detachment. Often called the "best unlicensed physicians in the world", SF medics undergo what may be the most difficult course of instruction in any of the services. They study tropical diseases, surgical techniques, anesthesiology, and the diagnosis and treatment of a wide variety of maladies of all kinds. SF medical civic action projects are automatically planned for prior to deployment in FID and a planning consideration in UW missions.

Also, every SF detachment possesses 2 engineer sergeants who are not only skilled demolitions specialists, but journeymen builders and architects as well. They are

competent to advise and assist indigenous communities in planning small building projects such as school houses, medical facilities, the digging of wells, and the construction of small dams and agricultural irrigation systems.

CA assessment teams perform the function of ascertaining what kinds of support are appropriate within a given Third World context. Currently, the overwhelming majority of CA assets are in the reserve component. This creates genuine problems for the potential employment of CA personnel in LIC. Currently, the U.S. Army's only active component CA unit is the 96th CA Battalion. One active duty battalion is grossly insufficient given the potential demands. As previously mentioned, addressing LIC threats requires a long-term and full time commitment. In the words of Secretary Locher:

...97 percent of our Civil Affairs personnel are in the reserve component, we face a mismatch between long-term requirements for Peacetime Engagement and the availability of some of the most needed forces.<sup>1</sup>

Even with this understanding, CA's reserve component possesses some extraordinary capabilities. Unlike the active army, reserve CA Branch recruits their personnel based on civilian occupational skills. For example:

...civil defense; labor; legal; public administration; public education; public finance; public health; public safety; public welfare; civilian supply; economics and commerce; agriculture; property control; public communications; transportation; public works and utilities; arts; monuments and archives; civil information; cultural affairs, and displaced civilians...<sup>2</sup>

Although some of these occupations are not in great demand in the peacetime army traditionally, they are of signal value in Third World nations attempting to build government, economic, and agricultural infrastructures. In addition, many of the CA reserve units are regionally oriented and possess linguists; and CA reserve personnel can be brought on active duty for relatively short periods of time should the circumstances warrant.

There is less a problem with the employment of PSYOP personnel and units. Although 75 percent of the PSYOP force structure is in the reserves, the active army has a PSYOP Group composed of 4 battalions located at Fort Bragg, NC. The 4th PSYOP Group can deploy printing presses, and radio and TV stations in support of a HN until an indigenous media infrastructure can be developed. Again, the object is to inform and influence the populace - and not control them.

It is essential to note that whatever military support is tendered to a HN, DOS and its subordinate and associated agencies will direct and coordinate all

developmental activities through the mechanism of the "Country Team". USIA and USAID objectives will be supported by the SOF Triad.

According to Dennis Barlow:

The center of gravity is the people's perception of the legitimacy and stability of their government; without it, any insurgency or counterinsurgency is doomed."

This can be viewed as a warning. The U.S. government takes American popular support generally for granted. This is simply not the case in much of the Third World.

If the U.S. employs the SOF Triad in support of an insurgency or counterinsurgency - the objective is not for America to win but to support others so they can win. In other words, the primary objective is to assist a Third World nation to win the popular support of its own people.

Legitimacy does not come easily in this environment. A people ruled by successions of repressive colonial and later dictatorial regimes are unlikely to recognize a legitimate government until it has proven itself over time. Over time, with U.S. assistance, military support to such governments can be reduced to occasional joint exercises and security assistance.

There is little glory in such tasks. Few if any medals will be presented to those performing these missions. There are no brass bands to welcome home the SOF members who

ply their trade in virtual anonymity. It is a tough job that requires significant sacrifices on the part of those who practice it.

A CA military lead in nation-building, unfortunately, may be tough to sell to DoD and the services. According to Rudolph Barnes:

The emphasis upon civilian support to achieve mission objectives in LIC requires a role reversal for Civil Affairs and combat forces. As a combat service support force, Civil Affairs units play a supporting role in conventional conflict. But because civilian support is key to mission success in LIC, CA units must assume a lead role.<sup>4</sup>

One of the problems in the past has been the lack of CA units and commanders in the active army. Since SF commanders regularly train and deploy with CA attachments and in some cases perform civic action missions, SF commands provide a viable surrogate for CA command and control when employed in support of a HN.

Let us now take a look at another possible future in Africa and potential U.S. support towards the ends of nation-building. First, it is important to note that the idea of nation-building is nothing new. Secretary Locher borrowed the term as a logical completion to his two-pronged strategic concept. With this understood, it should be clear that nation-building is easily divorced from its association with counteracting violence in Peacetime Engagement.

Also, I chose to discuss possible U.S. support to a democratic insurgent movement in chapter 6 instead of a government because although insurgent support is not a stated goal of Peacetime Engagement, it is an area which should be considered. In any case, the principles that govern such support to either nations or movements remains remarkably the same.

Instead of examining only one country in this chapter, it might better serve to highlight the capabilities of SOF in support of nation-building by taking a continental approach. Different nations require different kinds of support. Assessments have to be made of both HN needs and U.S. capabilities. It may be a unique circumstance where SF, CA, and PSYOP, supported by other army and service SOF, will be employed simultaneously against a threat or in support of a democratic insurgent movement. It may be more common to address the most pressing requirements of an African nation and take more discriminate and even more low-level approaches.

Here is where SOF flexibility pays off. Dependant upon the circumstances surrounding a HN's political-military climate SOF can be tailored to meet nearly any need. But, regardless of SOF flexibility, and in either phase of Peacetime Engagement, it should be remembered that



conventional brute force is sometimes appropriate. For example, one kind of threat response to a north African leader occurred:

When President Reagan sent American air and naval forces in to Libya on April 15, 1986, the bombs dropped by our aircraft carried a message to Col. Muammar Khadafy more articulate than mere words. The U.S. raid was a psychological operation aimed at influencing the thought processes of the Libyan leader. The message apparently got through -- following the raid, Khadafy's support to international terrorism noticeably dropped, or at least went further underground.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, violence is sometimes the only way to reason with dictators. This kind of pure military response is always available should circumstances warrant.

According to the former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Chester A. Crocker before the Congress:

There are those who would argue that we should curtail military assistance to African countries. We cannot and should not do that. We run the...risks of losing the influence that we have and of actually adding to instability...<sup>3</sup>

Remember that stability is one of the objectives of Peacetime Engagement. SOF security assistance support to a HN through nation-building can both help to gain and maintain the stability that is needed to develop true democracies.

The rationale for American interest in nation-building in North-east Africa should be self-evident:

The Horn of Africa is strategically located with respect to the Persian Gulf - Southwest Asia region. This north-eastern tip, or "Horn," is comprised of Somalia, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. Key neighboring states are Kenya on the south and Sudan on the west. The area's importance has increased...7

This is particularly true now in the wake of the Persian Gulf War. This is also an area of considerable turmoil. Where it is politically wise to do so, SOF can be employed to assist and advise in small detachments that can be employed rapidly - and just as rapidly extracted should the need arise.

It should be clear, though, that economics is the key to development and not the military; but CA support to an African nation under the DoS as lead agency has considerable capability. The HN's military role remains to provide a stable security environment where peaceful economic and political development can take place. Obviously, SOF have much to give towards the objectives of nation-building.

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1. James R. Locher III, "Peacetime Engagement", National Defense, December 1989, 29.
2. DoD Civil Affairs Master Plan, (draft) Department of Defense, Washington, D.C., ND, 1-1.
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4. Rudolph C. Barnes, "Civil Affairs: A LIC Priority", Military Review, September 1988, 39-40.
5. Scott S. Herbert and Robert B. Adolph Jr., "A Commonsense Approach to Psychological Operations", Special Warfare, Winter 1989, 30.
6. Chester A. Crocker, FY 1987 Assistance Request for Sub-Saharan Africa, Current Policy, No. 814, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., March 18, 1986, 5.
7. Sub-Saharan Africa and the United States, U.S. Department of State, Discussion Paper, December 1985, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 22.

## Chapter 8

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The U.S. Army Command and General Staff College teaches a strategic analysis model which suggests that there are three criteria by which to examine a potential strategy like SOF support to Peacetime Engagement for efficacy. Those criteria are suitability, feasibility, and acceptability. It may be useful to look at the strategy I suggest through this methodology.

A USASOF strategy supported by other service SOF and in support of DoS objectives appears to be eminently suitable. In addition to their new and integrated command and control structure, these forces are uniquely trained and equipped to perform the myriad of missions found in LIC. They are mature, linguistically capable, and culturally attuned and sensitive. The combination of their military capabilities and personal characteristics mark them as unique in the American services. No other forces possess this degree of training, skills, maturity and knowledge. This gives SOF an extremely high degree of flexibility and versatility in the LIC environment. Given these considerations, I believe SOF are the most capable element of national military power to best achieve U.S. interests.

Feasibility asks the question: is it supportable? I believe the answer is yes. SOF employment is both low-cost and low-visibility. SOF employment will not stretch the national budget. Remember that the greatest cost for mobile training teams is often for transportation; and in some cases, that cost is borne by the HN. SOF employment, also, should not give dissident groups in Third World nations cause for particular alarm. SOF are few in number and generally operate well outside sometimes highly politically charged urban areas. Additionally, nothing SOF do in the Third World potentially detracts from other military missions.

Whether or not a strategy is acceptable or not requires a largely subjective judgment. I believe such a strategy is acceptable to the American people and thus Congress. Americans realize that the missions that their Special Operations Forces are engaged in are inherently more dangerous than the normal military peacetime activities. Although a SOF supported strategy of Peacetime Engagement may be a second best national security strategy because of American democratic pluralism, it may in fact be the most effective and cost efficient strategy currently available to U.S. security planners. SOF are the ultimate volunteers. There is no one serving in SOF that does not want to be there. The periodic deaths of SOF members, while

regrettable, is the price of doing business in an often violent Third World.

The conceptual strategy of Peacetime Engagement which operates in the two phases of counteracting violence and then engaging in nation-building provides an excellent national capstone philosophy. Although Secretary Locher overlooked the possibility of support to democratic insurgent movements, the remainder of his concept appears well grounded.

The case for a SOF supported strategy of Peacetime Engagement in Africa is more problematic but no less pressing. From the President's "draft" 1991 National Security Strategy:

Africa is now entering a post-independence age in which it can benefit from past mistakes and build a realistic, self-sustaining future. It is in our interest, for political as well as humanitarian reasons to help that process.<sup>1</sup>

It should be clear that America has both pragmatic and moral reasons for being militarily, as well as politically, and economically engaged on the continent of Africa. "Benign neglect (concerning Africa) will not suffice."<sup>2</sup> Fostering democracy and human rights, as well as the potential value of strategic minerals to the U.S., provide ample rationale for the indirect and low visibility approach suggested by the employment of Special Operations Forces.

I believe that the strategic rationale for Special Operations Forces employment is found in the forces themselves. In the near future, America will likely be bombarded with low-level security threats in the Third World. Unfortunately, and based on past experience, America has been generally unable to respond to like situations until hostages are taken, an invasion takes place, or a situation erodes to the point where U.S. interests are clearly threatened. A SOF supported Peacetime Engagement strategy which uses every arrow in the American national security quiver - political, diplomatic, psychological, economic, as well as military - provides America with the opportunity to take the initiative and make a real difference in forming "the new world order".

### Endnotes

1. National Security Strategy of the United States, (draft), 1991, The White House, Washington, D.C., ND, 24.
2. Ibid., 24.



## CHAPTER 9

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Political:

The Department of State needs to take the initiative and begin the process to rationalize procedures between itself and the Department of Defense. This means that DoS must begin to write LIC doctrine. Although the writing of doctrine appears to be antithetical to its' institutional subculture, DoS as the lead agency is clearly responsible. Unfortunately, and according to Todd Greentree of DoS:

Neither the State Department, nor any other department is prepared to attempt to assert leadership over U.S. Third World conflict policy.<sup>1</sup>

If Mr. Greentree is correct, then no DoS led strategy development or doctrine writing is likely. This means that SOF's relative importance as a surrogate for the lack of a strategy becomes all the more crucial.

If DoS could be convinced to take its' appropriate role as the lead agency in LIC, it should concentrate its efforts in the realm of inter-agency coordination at the country team level. The object is to insure that political, diplomatic, economic, psychological, as well as military components of U.S. national power are applied in such a way as to achieve national goals in any LIC situation. The current "patchwork quilt" of competing national agencies,

although tolerable domestically, is woefully inadequate towards reaching the goals of fostering democracy in a nation of the Third World.

One key to beginning this work is to develop the parameters whereby the U.S. can judge whether or not a nation or insurgent movement is worthy of American support. This is no easy task. Allow me to suggest that if such parameters had been established 10 years ago, the U.S. would not have supported Iraq against Iran in their 8 year war. Saddam Hussein as a tyrant and enemy of democracy could not have met even minimum criteria for American support.

Since most of this nation's expertise in handling LIC exists currently within the DoD, recommend the establishment of a DoS-DoD working group to begin doctrinal and procedural rationalization. The National Security Council LIC board established by the Goldwater-Nichols Act is the logical venue for such a group, but not the only one.

#### Military:

Contingency operations are part of the LIC equation. Given the American experiences in Grenada, Panama, and Iraq, this should not be in question. Any U.S. division could find itself engaged in a contingency that places as much .

importance on the political as military conduct of the conflict; yet currently, there are few officers on a division staff that could advise a division commander on the intricacies of PSYOP or CA missions and activities. Divisions as well as corps must have trained CA and PSYOP officers assigned as an integral part of their staffs. Currently this is not the case with most combat divisions.

I also recommend a permanently forward deployed special forces battalion in each region of the world. Currently, only two special forces battalions remain forward deployed: one in Japan and one in Germany. Unlike the forward deployment of conventional forces, a permanently forward deployed special forces battalion is relatively cheap. Additionally, and as stated in chapter 4, much of SF's capabilities can be found in their characteristics, e.g. their language and regional/cultural expertise. Forward deployment insures that SF linguistic and regional expertise will remain current. Additionally, forward deployment means that ready forces will always be available in-region and on a short notice basis should an emergency arise.

Remove the term nation-building from all government documents and replace it with a term like nation or country assistance. The United States is not in the business of

building nations. America is in the business of assisting other countries reach their full democratic potential. The goals of both DoS and DoD can be generally described with the phrase "helping others to help themselves". Allow me to suggest that this is not idealistic but coldly pragmatic. It is in American self-interests to assist young democracies as the first line of defense in maintaining our own enduring values.

Both the U.S. Air Force and Navy currently lack doctrine that addresses itself to foreign internal defense. This is a mistake. Both services need to place immediate emphasis in this arena. If the two services refuse to tackle this doctrinal vacuum, then USSOCOM has to fill this void. Doctrinal vision often drives personnel management, force structure and technological development. All the services, not just the army, must develop doctrine for the missions probable in LIC.

Expand both CA and PSYOP force structure. The one active duty battalion stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina is grossly inadequate to the potential need demanded by possible world-wide commitments. CA requires a brigade structure with a battalion dedicated to support each of the combatant CinCs. The one PSYOP organization, although of group size, still lacks the assets to perform

all the missions that may be demanded of it. Simply put, each CInC requires the dedicated active duty support of both a CA and PSYOP battalion.

Although a group structure is roughly equivalent to a brigade, group status is a lower order of command. I believe that the current CA and PSYOP units located at Fort Bragg, NC should be upgraded to brigade status and be commanded by brigadier generals because of the strategic importance of their units' missions and the political sensitivities involved in their roles. Flag rank is of inordinate importance when dealing with issues of national military, political and diplomatic concern.

Africa:

I am not an expert in African affairs. My research for this thesis did not make me an expert, but allow me to suggest that regional expertise for the purposes of this study is not of critical importance. Potential American engagement in support of freedom and democracy on the continent of Africa is not something we would do because of the Africans. It is something we would do because of who we are and what we believe.

The current crop of bureaucrats in both the State and Defense Departments "earned their spurs" during the Cold War. Maintaining the status quo of Containment was their primary objective for over 40 years. It seems that they were successful. At least the Soviet Union "appears" less threatening. It may take time to think in new ways even while guarding ourselves from the old and now hopefully receding threats.

The new challenge may now be between the world's haves and have nots. Today, most of the earth's population lives in poverty and without the democratic freedoms most Americans take for granted. America must embrace a strategy like Peacetime Engagement or evolve one similar to it. The United States cannot just standby. To para-phrase the 18th century British parliamentarian, Edmond Burke, all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good Americans to do nothing. And, according to the most recent draft of the President's National Security Strategy:

We owe our servicemen and women not only the best equipment, but also a coherent strategy and posture geared to new realities. This coherence can only come from a partnership between the Branches. Divided, we will invite disasters. United we can overcome any challenge.<sup>2</sup>

There is a growing recognition that the current bureaucratic and status quo dominated state of affairs in Washington, D.C. must change. Ideas which spring from such recognition, like people, mature slowly. The 21st Century could be characterized by later historians as the "age of democracy". What the United States does over the next few decades will largely determine the eventual outcome of that historical judgment in Africa as well as the remainder of the Third World. The U.S. Army Special Operations Forces Triad, supported by other service SOF, have a primary role to play in the attainment of the U.S. objectives of fostering democracy and stability internationally. The challenge is before us.

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

JCS Publication 1, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (1 June 1987), Field Manual (FM) 110-20/Air Force Manual (AFM) 2-20, Military Operations in Low-Intensity Conflict (approved final draft, 1989) provides the following definitions:

(1) National Policy. A broad course of action or statements of guidance adopted by the government at the national level in pursuit of national objectives (JCS Pub 1).

(2) National Objectives. Those fundamental aims, goals, or purposes of a nation--as opposed to the means for seeking those ends--toward which a policy is directed and efforts and resources of the nation are applied (JCS Pub 1).

(3) Strategy. The art and science of developing and using political, economic, psychological, and military forces as necessary during peace or war, to afford the maximum support to policies, in order to increase the probabilities and favorable consequences of victory and to lessen the chances of defeat (JCS Pub 1).

a. National Strategy. The art and science of developing and using the political, economic, and psychological powers of a nation, together with its armed

forces, during peace and war, to secure national objectives (JCS Pub 1).

b. **Military Strategy.** The art and science of employing the armed forces of a nation to secure the objectives of national policy by the application of force or threat of force (JCS Pub 1).

(4) **Low-Intensity Conflict.** Politico-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional war and above the routine, peaceful competition among states. It frequently involves protracted struggle of competing principles and ideologies. Low-intensity conflict ranges from subversion to the use of armed forces. It is waged by a combination of means, employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments. Low-intensity conflicts are often localized, generally in the Third World, but contain regional and global security implications. (FM 100-20/AFM 2-20)

(Author's note - The longer the definition, the more confusing the concept. LIC may be best defined by what it is not. LIC is not peace and it is not conventional war. LIC is an environment which lacks traditional American touchstones of familiarity: hence the continuing confusion in American policy-making circles.)

(5) **Insurgency.** An organized, armed political struggle whose goal may be the seizure of power through revolutionary takeover and replacement of the existing government. In some cases, however, an insurgency's goal may be more limited. For example, the insurgency may intend to breakaway from government control and establish an

autonomous state within traditional ethnic or religious territorial bounds. The insurgency may also intend to extract limited political concessions through less violent means (FM 100-20/AFM 2-20).

(6) Counter-Insurgency. Those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat an insurgency (JCS Pub 1).

(7) Guerrilla Warfare. Military and paramilitary operations conducted in enemy held or hostile territory by irregular, predominantly indigenous forces (FM 100-20/AFM 2-20).

(8) Counter-Guerrilla Warfare. Operations and activities conducted by armed forces, paramilitary forces, or non-military agencies against guerrillas (JCS Pub 1).

(9) Foreign Internal Defense. Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency (JCS Pub 1).

(10) Security Assistance. Group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, or other related statutes by which the United States provided defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services, by grant, credit, or cash sales,

in furtherance of national policies and objectives  
(JCS Pub 1).

(11) Peacetime Engagement. A strategy for promoting democracy in the Third World and for defeating low intensity conflict threats. It implements a two-pronged approach to meet these ends. First, it seeks to counteract violence through the use of U.S. military forces that perform missions to counter terrorism, narcotics trafficking, insurgencies, and subversion. Once a more stable security environment prevails. Peacetime Engagement initiates a second phase that utilizes various instruments of U.S. national power to promote nation-building. The ultimate goals of this strategy are to redress Third World instability, to avoid direct and costly involvement of U.S. military forces in conventional combat, and to promote development of lasting democratic and economic institutions. (Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict).

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REPLY TO  
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2 May 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR ATTN: Larry Downing, DTIC-OCQ, Defense Technical Information Center, 8725 John J. Kingman Road, Suite 0944, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-6218

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